





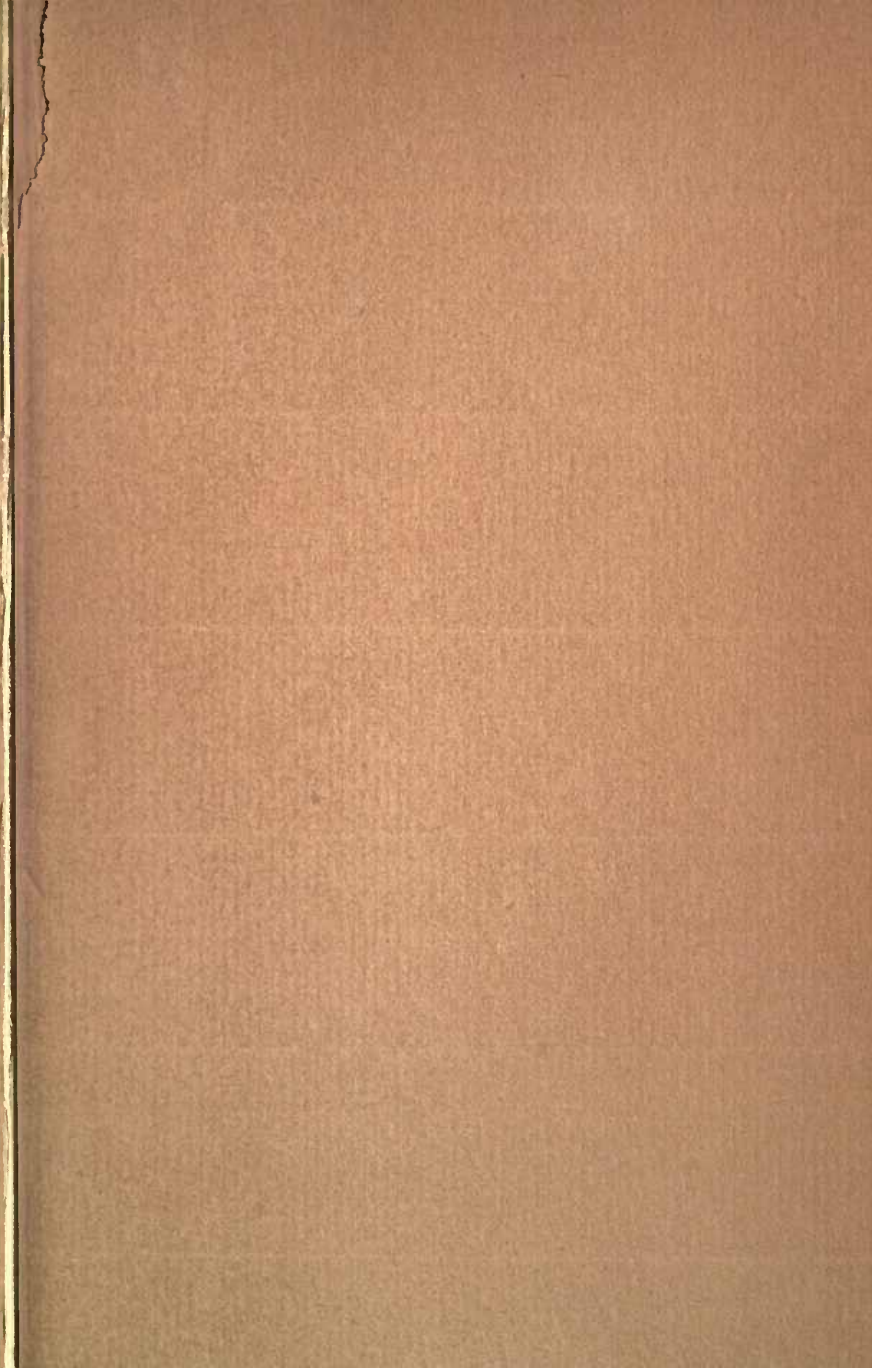
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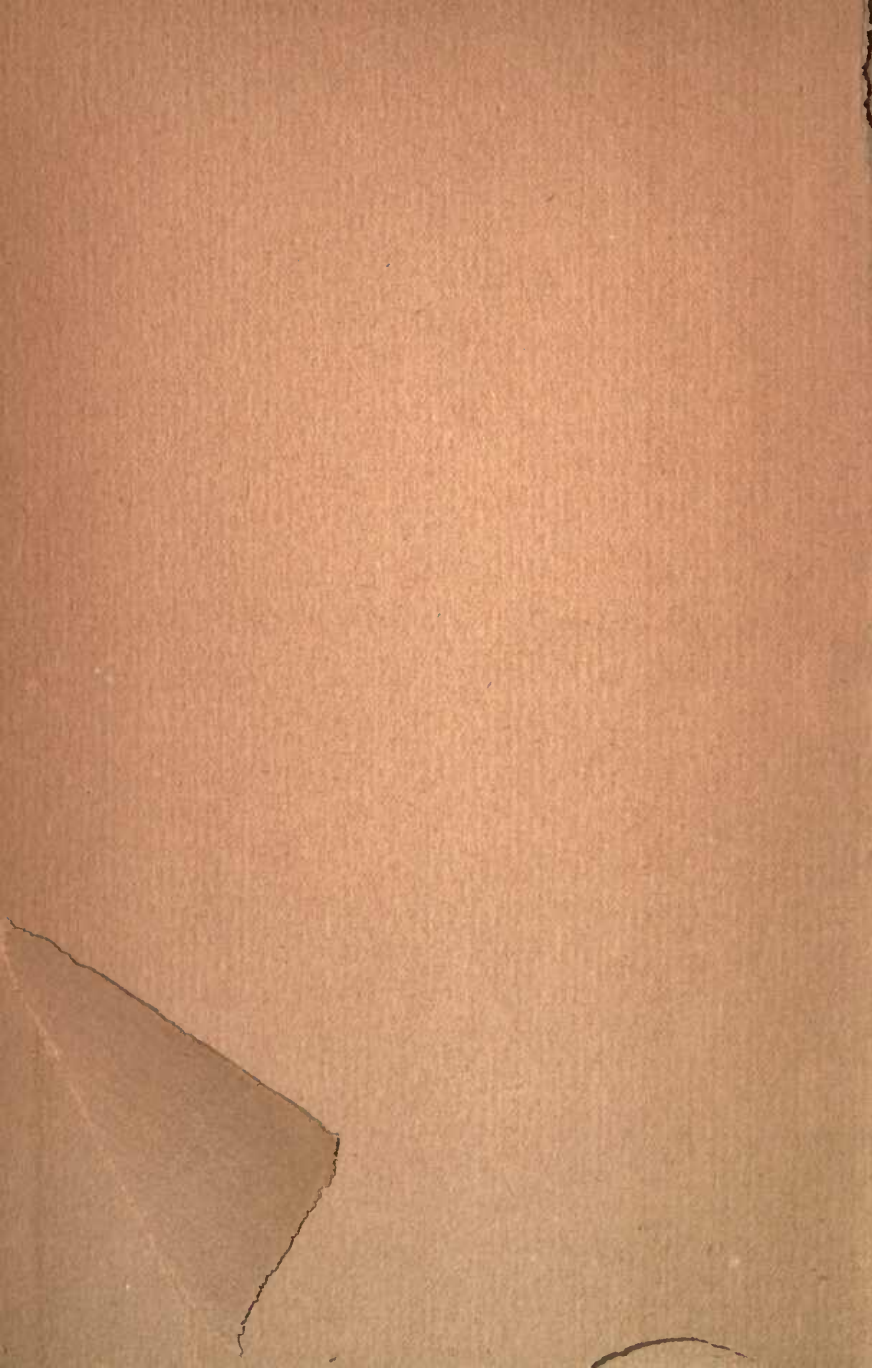
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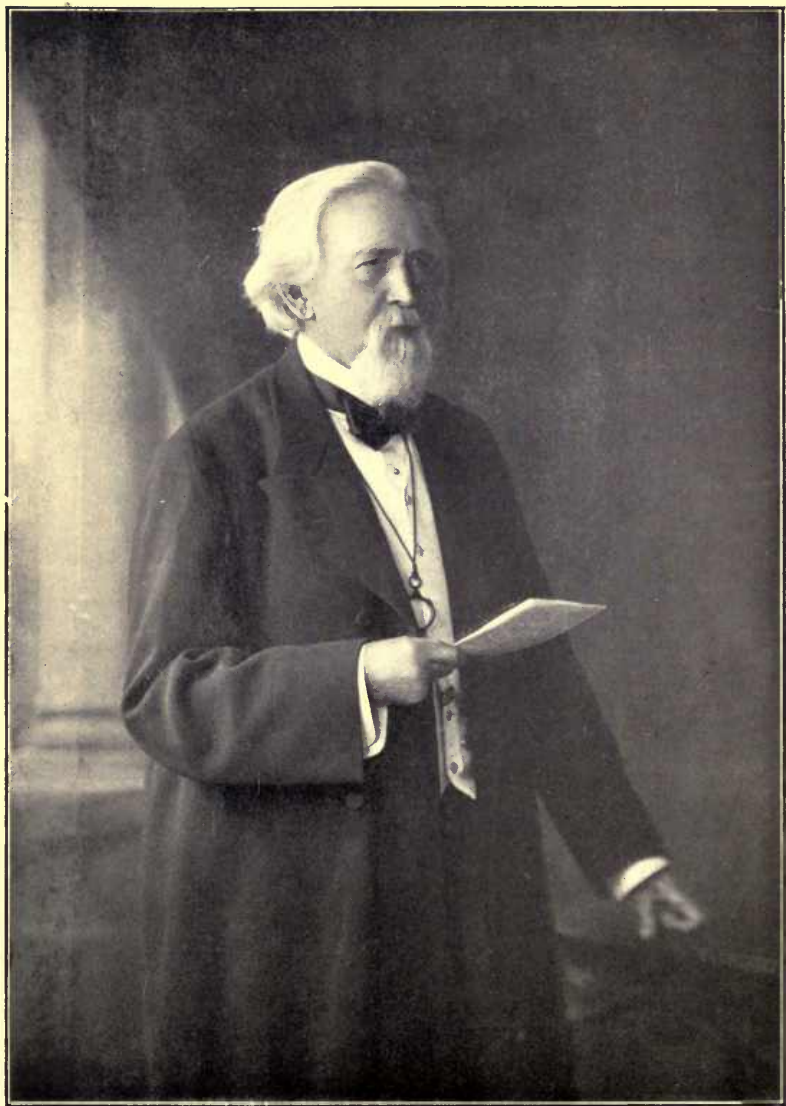
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218



G. J. HOLYOAKE,

In his 88th Year.

*Photo by Kent & Lacey.*

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# SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE

BY  
GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE

AUTHOR OF "HISTORY OF CO-OPERATION"; "SELF-HELP 100 YEARS AGO";  
"TRIAL OF THEISM," ETC.

"In order to become acquainted with an age or a people we must also know something of its second-rate and obscure men. It is in the beliefs, sentiments, and lot of unimportant individuals and unknown families, that the lot, the sentiments, and the beliefs of the country are to be found."—GUILLOT



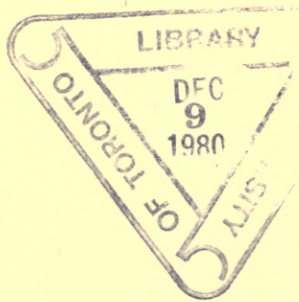
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## PREFACE.

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DESPITE the brave homilies on virtue which abound, this is a world in which a man may be too good, and become an object of distrust by those who never lay themselves open to this suspicion. The most misgiving reader need not be afraid of the present writer. He is not too good.

In one of Ben Jonson's plays, a servant speaks of his master as "an honest gentleman, who is never at leisure to be himself; he has such tides of business." That has been the case with the Author. So much and so long occupied in vindicating the right of others to their own lives and the expression of their own reasoned opinions, he has had, until late years, no leisure to express his own.

The diversified experience of the writer has been owing to a wilfulness of sympathy with all self-helping efforts of improvement in the State, in society, and in opinion. He does not belong to those unpleasant and superior persons who have faith in themselves and no faith in others; who, as Robert Burns found in his day, "take pride in showing a proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor insignificant devils, the mechanics and peasants around them"—although they are as much entitled to happiness as those who despise them are. It is not the few who make the many, but the many who make the few. Those who live without solicitude for the welfare of others do but encumber the land. When they die—

"Nor earth nor sky shall yield a single tear;  
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,  
Nor gale breathe one sigh for them—for all."

They, by their own choice, stand apart from humanity, and will have no claim to rise again in another world—having been of no use to any one in this. The Author has honour alone for those who have an *outside* nature, and this record is mainly of movements and men having this aim or this passion.

G. J. H.

### NOTES TO THIRD EDITION.

ON page 179 and elsewhere the reader has been apprised that these chapters, with few exceptions, appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, whose variety pages have become so widely entertaining under the editorship of Mr. W. E. Adams. From its readers valued corrections came, incorporated now in the text. The Author never pretended to see all things at first—he is not sure that he sees all things at last—but he sees more than he would have seen had he not been aided by the critical correspondents of that journal. Critics are the ministers of perfection, though the author may never attain to it. To others also I owe acknowledgments.

Sam Timmins (Arley) informs me that, though the newspapers of 1867 spelled Pieri's name with two, his visiting cards bore the name G. A. Pieri.

Dr. J. A. Langford (Birmingham) tells me that Geo. Edmonds, described (vol. i. p. 31) as Town Clerk, "was Clerk of the Peace. The appointment caused much commotion, and the Duke of Wellington brought the subject before the House of Lords."

Mr. James Dixon (Dorking) describes "Old Bags" (p. 109) "as the nickname of Lord Eldon." "It originated," he believes, "with the famous bags of documents which he laid on the table of the House of Lords at Queen Caroline's trial." It is said (p. 189) Mr. Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, was the operator at Carlile's dissection. Mr. Dixon says, "Not so. Mr. Grainger, who kept a Medical School at Webb Street, in the Borough, had become Lecturer on Anatomy at St. Thomas's Hospital, and on that occasion delivered an address on Carlile's body. I was at that time Demonstrator of Anatomy, and superintended the dissection after Mr. Grainger's lecture." Mr. Dixon adds, "On p. 415 it is said, 'A single blow broke Sayers's right arm.' The surgeon who had examined Sayers found that no bone had been broken, but that the muscles of Sayers's *left* arm were almost reduced to *pulp*. Afterwards Sayers fought with his right arm only. The Annual Register for 1860, p. 52, has the same error as to Sayers's right arm being broken."

James Charlton (Chicago), says Mr. Wilton (Hamillon, Canada), writes that one of Carlyle's nieces wishes Mr. Holyoake to know that her mother is not dead, as he says (p. 193). This error I have pleasure in correcting. Mrs. Hanning is the only surviving member of Thomas Carlyle's sisters and brothers.

# SIXTY YEARS OF AN AGITATOR'S LIFE.



## CHAPTER I.

### *THE OLD REASON FOR WRITING A NEW BOOK.*

AN author, however he may disown it, will be suspected of some egotism who writes any account of the events of his life. He can hardly presume they have interest without assuming that they have some importance. A favourite way of parrying this inference is to represent that what the author has done has been urged upon him by others. Yet a story "published by request" is never read for that reason. The author is usually regarded as having requested himself to do it, or that some personal friends, knowing that he was bent upon it, made the request to him that a colour of outside interest might be given to the act.

The persons who incited me did really put the idea into my head. Mr. William White, Door Keeper of the House of Commons, several times said to me that I ought to write some account of the social and political affairs in which I had taken part. In the midnight and early morning hours I often spent with him in his room at the House of Commons, when lingering debates were dull, we used to converse about the underground actors, who had died in our time, to whom political progress had owed something.

Thomas Allsop, the friend of Coleridge and Lamb, of O'Connor and Orsini, oft urged me to give some account of the proscribed men of thought and action with whom I had been

associated, Sam Timmins, of Birmingham ; Joseph Cowen, of Blaydon-on-Tyne ; W. H. Duignan, of Walsall ; R. B. Reed, of Winlaton, who has a journalist's instinct for incidents ; Col. R. G. Ingersoll, of Washington ; James Charlton, of Chicago ; and James Knowles, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, who proposed to publish the chapters therein—an act of temerity which gave weight to his word—and many others diverse in experience and far apart, said the same thing to me. Thus I came to believe there might be interest in doing it, and have devoted the intervals of ten years to it. The reader may think the time might have been better bestowed.

In citing the names of those who incited me to write this story there is no intention of imputing to them the responsibility of the contents thereof, which they have never seen, and in which no episode that had interest in their minds, may be given here in the same connection, or told after a lapse of years, with the vividness and relevance which excited their advice. Nothing more is meant by giving their names than to show that any writer might be excused attempting a narrative which such judges had suggested.

Still I am afraid there is some meanness in citing names of those who (if I am believed) induced me to write the book, since I am exposing them—if the story proves tiresome—to that resentment which ought to fall upon the writer alone.

Though the narrative has occupied the leisure of years, the procrastination is not wholly loss. He who delays concluding his book until years of discretion have fairly set in (which arrive at 75 if they come at all) has the advantage of remoteness of view, sees in truer proportion the events he describes. Time takes out of incidents the effrontery and inflation which their novelty begets at their birth.

There is a further advantage in delay, memory grows indolent, and a narrator is less likely to weary the reader with too many recitals. As it is, I remember more things than the public or posterity (should the book reach them) will ever take interest in reading. Therefore, as I heard Serjeant Talfourd at Worcester ask a jury when his evidence was limited, "Sufficient unto the day—is the evil thereof?"

At the head of some chapters the reader will find double dates, showing the years over which the chapter ranges. The book is

an autobiography of events, experiences, observations of men, manners, and opinions which came under my notice. The story is only incidentally an autobiography of the writer, whose life in chronological detail is not of the importance to interest the general reader. The main endeavour of the author, upon which he depends as his best justification to the reader, is that he restricts these pages to those events which have, he conceives, public instruction in them. A book of a similar character relating to movements in the earlier part of this century would have been of no mean service to him when he was young, as this peradventure may be to many now.

## CHAPTER II.

### OUTLINE OF THE STORY.

"WHY should I read this book?" is a question I often ask myself on opening a new one. Books multiply—time seems to be more occupied than when they were scarce, and every new book bears with it the ostensible promise of new wisdom and new experience. Each work seems to have an equal claim upon the reader. It is natural, therefore, to wish for an outline (of the kind here given) of its character which may justify him in, or deter him from, undertaking its perusal.

These chapters are the story of a Birmingham man, born in sight of St. Martin's Church spire, when it peered above the parsonage trees in the year in which Robert Owen declared in the London Tavern that "all the religions of the world were wrong"—and Jonathan Wooler issued the first number of the *Black Dwarf*, and St. Jean Godin, founder of the famous Familistère of Guise, was born, so that the writer's days began when social and political ideas were in the air. Early familiar with economy and industry, a little good fortune seemed great, and activity became a habit which had pleasure in it, and was at once dependence and independence—dependence, because mechanical skill was a personal resource; independence, because the power of working renders any one free of obligation. Trained in Christianity, he came personally to know that sincerity was not the same thing as truth, and never forgot in after-life that error might be honest. Knowledge without books was his chief attainment, as knowledge lies about everywhere at hand to those who observe and think. Seeing that he had to be answerable here for what he believed, and was told it would be so hereafter, he thought it prudent to form his own opinions, since it was

incurring superfluous responsibility to become liable for the errors of others. This gave him the perilous habit of saying what he thought, which led to his being imprisoned for six months in Gloucester Gaol, to encourage him in candour. These were his college days of learning. John Sterling says that "the worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else and not that." In this sense the subject of these pages was well instructed, as during his whole life opportunities of self-denial were continually afforded him. Graduating in a gaol was not a recommendation afterwards to profitable employment, and he became a wandering speaker on prohibited subjects of usefulness and progress. At times he might have had some advantageous and accredited position on the press or in popular movements, but it was thought that his name might deter others from doing something who never did anything. The only opportunities which befell him were those of doing what many agreed ought to be done, and of undertaking responsibilities which, owing to legal risks, or a clearer sense of prudence, others declined. Controversies befell him in which he was saved from forming any undue opinion of himself by the disparaging frankness of adversaries, and in which the best and surest part of such knowledge as he acquired was derived from the critical malevolence of opponents. Seeing that spite in argument instructed those whose aim was the mastery of a subject, he regarded even the ill-tempered and malignant opponent as the friend of truth. He, therefore, encouraged and never humiliated these assistant adversaries. He who knows both sides of a disputed question is alone able to be fair to the adverse convictions of others. The spirit of his story is described in the lines of Sir Henry Taylor—

"He had this honesty  
That, undesirous of a false renown,  
He ever wished to pass for what he was.  
Being still  
Deliberately bent upon the right,  
He kept it in the main."

Whittier relates that he left the "mission he had to fulfil, to turn the crank of an opinion mill." Whereas if the present author had a "mission" at all it was to turn that sort of crank. He was an opinion-maker—a very useful business if honestly

and intelligently done. But if the trade is confined to the manufacture of true opinions the "concern" will rarely pay. The sales will never be large and the profit will be small. The owner of such a business will be fortunate if he escape loss. In this respect the writer was not fortunate. The one quality of his mind was that of a propagandist. It coloured his aims, his character, his life. Without foreseeing it, without expecting it, it came to pass, when age and blindness, for a time, overtook him, many eminent persons, who considered him to have rendered some service to the State in his day, contributed, with his humbler friends, means that rendered work no longer *obligatory* to him. As he had always acted on George Herbert's maxim, "Never exceed thy income" (when it was precarious and small), a very limited income was a source of health and enjoyment beyond what any who provided it could know. Opinionativeness and wilfulness are not qualities to be approved, unless they are mainly directed to the service of others. But, though they bring vicissitude, they bring satisfaction, if public improvement has been their incentive. Thus the subject of this autobiography may say in a lesser degree, what could be fully said by him<sup>1</sup> who wrote the lines—

"If he has gained but little for his purse,  
His conscience, happily, is none the worse ;  
He never flouted peasant, fawned on peer,  
He neither stooped to flattery nor to fear,  
Knew in familiar fashion, face to face,  
The wisest and the best of England's race ;  
Still walks erect, although his head is grey,  
And feels his youth not wholly slipped away."

The outline of the whole story the author has to tell is now before the reader, and unless he has adventurous curiosity, he need not proceed further.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Thorold Rogers.

## CHAPTER III.

### *ANCESTORS.*

(1817.)

WHEN Sydney Smith was questioned concerning his ancestors, he answered that his family went no further back than his grandfather, who disappeared at the Assizes, and they asked no questions. My paternal grandfather also "disappeared," but we did "ask questions," though to these no answer came until the next generation. His name was Jacob. He was a man of unusual stature and strength, and stories were told of his carrying a town watchman home on his shoulder who had been unpleasant to him on his way. He had a forge on the old river Rea in Birmingham. His name and business is in the directories of the last century. Through the fraud of a partner, in a law contest as to a right of way, losses by floods, which washed away his premises, trouble overtook him. His family having some property he went away alone to repair his own fortune, and his family never heard of him more. Forty years later an old artizan in Sheffield, made curious by seeing my name on a placard, told me that he had lived in a house in Manchester in which a "Jacob Holyoake" resided—a powerful, wilful man, he described him to be, who, having made a little money, went down one day to meet the Birmingham coach, saying he intended to rejoin his family. He was too late, and in his disappointment went and leaned over the hospital wall, which one less tall could not have done. The place contained many patients with a contagious fever, which he caught. Refusing to believe in his danger when seized, and disliking medicine, he perished. As he had never disclosed

anything concerning himself, he was never identified until the old man told me the story of his isolation and end—forty years subsequent. And thus for the first time his family learned how he died.

There was a tortoise-shell tea caddy in possession of my informant's family given them by my grandfather. It appears that, when death approached, he begged that his friend might be sent for, as he wished to make some communication—doubtless a message to his family ; but as the doctors forbade any one to be admitted, the fever being deadly, his friend was not told of his wish until after his death—so that his secret never transpired.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Richard Groves. His business was that of a bucklemaker. In the early years of the long war, when taxes were heavy, men worked from five o'clock in the morning until nine at night—hours which would drive trades unionists mad in these days. Being provident-minded, during a great part of his life he subscribed to a society from which special provision was to come in his later years ; but when the time came the society broke up, as was the way of societies in his day. In my youth he was a minor dignitary of the Established Church—very minor, indeed, being a beadle of St. Martin's Church. There were two or three differing in degree, but whether of service or seniority I never knew. The office was one of more local awe than emolument. The beadle's staff at a door was the sign of a funeral, and the beadle walking before the humble burial party gave it, in the eyes of the poor, the character of a sacred procession. I used to look with wonder at my grandfather's fine long blue coat, red collar, brass buttons, and his tall japanned staff with gilt nails. When a boy I used to often go round the churchyard with him to see that the gravestones and the grass were all in order. My great delight was to accompany him to his garden in the Bristol Road, which seemed to me a paradise of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables. He would go in the summer as early as four o'clock in the morning. He used to allow me to strike him a light with steel and flint struck over tinder<sup>\*</sup>—lucifer matches

<sup>\*</sup> Match-boxes bore the name of "tinder-boxes." The tinder being made by burning old linen which readily received the spark from the flint. Brimstone-pointed matches could then be lighted at it. The old process of getting a light is unfamiliar to this generation.

were not invented then—that he might have a morning smoke in his little arbour. He continued to go to his garden until a few weeks before his death, which occurred at a patriarchal age. In the evenings, in his later days, I used to read the prayers to him from the Church prayer-book, when he could no longer do it himself. I can see him now, kneeling on his chair, holding himself upright by his two hands on the back, bowing his head reverently as I read to him, I sitting on a small chair below him. He would put on his beadle's coat at this time, as though his dress had religious association in his mind.

A few years ago an old resident (C. N.), who remembered the circumstance, described in *The Birmingham Weekly Post* the local respect in which he was held, and the large crowd who followed him to his grave.

Such were my two grandfathers ; my grandmothers I never knew, and never heard described.

My ancestral inheritance was not of a nature to elate me, though it gave me pleasure. It consisted of a walking-stick of my grandfather's, of a curious spiral growth, and an inlaid ivory-headed cane belonging to my paternal grandmother, bearing the date of 1699. This estate of sticks and an habitual wilfulness of opinion and imagination, which had no misgiving—always characteristic of my father and his family—were the only signs I knew of a station superior to that in which their lot was cast. A strong sense of pride and capacity of submitting without concern to any privation which came through resenting indignity—were peculiar to them all. My father's sisters had property at Selly Oak, near Birmingham. Often I heard speak of "the Holyoakes, of Selly Oak." In Nantwich Churchyard may still be read a memorial-stone bearing the name of my grandfather's brother, who had held, up to the time of his death, official appointments in that ancient parish.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *PARENTAGE.*

(1817.)

My mother's maiden name was Catherine Groves, and as she took the name of Holy-oak we had a woodland pedigree. She was a Puritan-minded woman, of clear, decided ideas, and had, later in life, a grave, impressive face. Of what she knew she was confident, and never had any doubts. She wished her children to be honest, truthful, and pious, and always set them the example. It never occurred to her to do otherwise than what she said. The contrary never entered into her mind. In those days horn buttons were made in Birmingham, and my mother had a workshop attached to the house, in which she conducted a business herself, employing several hands. She had the business before her marriage. She received the orders ; made the purchases of materials ; superintended the making of the goods ; made out the accounts ; and received the money ; besides taking care of her growing family. There were no "Rights of Women" thought of in her day, but she was an entirely self-acting, managing mistress. There were feasts in the house at that time. I remember stealing out of bed one night to survey from the top of the stairs the well-spread table upon which was the first roasted sucking-pig I saw. The button business died out while I was young, and from the remarks which came from merchants, I learned that my mother was the last maker of that kind of button in the town. It was always a peculiarity of Birmingham that numerous small household trades existed, which gave the inmates independence, and often led—if the trade continued good—to competence or

fortune. I recite these particulars, as they denote a state of industry and society which has long passed away.

My first recollection of my father was seeing him on Sunday and festive days, in drab cloth breeches and boots with white tops, such as are worn now only in the hunting-field, and a brown overcoat, called a "top-coat" then, which looked very rich in my eyes.

My father was in his sixty-third year at the time of his death. He was tall and comely. He had an honest voice and an expression which told you he could be trusted. His manners were free without familiarity. Some men, rise to what rank they may, always retain plebeian habits ; this was not so with my father, although he spent so large a portion of his life as a workman. His associates and also his employers showed him respect in their speech. He owed some of this deference to his mechanical ability. I passed thirteen years by his side in the workshop, and never saw him addressed as other men around him often were. What laws of etiquette he had were his own. When summoned by his employers he always walked up (unless into office or a private room) without uncovering his head, as was usual with others. His not doing so seemed natural to him. It was not disrespect, it was self-respect.

Had the opportunities of learning existed in his youth which exist in our day, his lot in life would have been very different. Mechanics' Institutions were not invented then, and the acquirements of a middle-class boy in 1800 were not many, and his were limited by the early disappearance of his father, whose loss his mother survived but a short time ; and my father was left an orphan, and head of the family, at an early age. He went when a youth to the Eagle Foundry, where he spent more than forty years. Holidays in manufactories were not so much a custom then as now. I never heard that during that long period he was absent through illness or pleasure. If a vacation time occurred at a fair or Christmas time, he spent it at some ideal invention of his own. Though entirely without self-assertion, he had a quiet implacable will. His self-respect once outraged, he never forgot it, and I cannot say he ever forgave it. Wanting the resources which men acquire in good society, or the power which culture gives, he had no means of protecting himself save by reserve ; and his resolution once taken, time

did not wear it out. His resentment became part of his nature. Though inheriting this implacable faculty myself, it has long been clear to me that it is wasted pertinacity. An offence which may arise in thoughtlessness, haste, or necessity, is not worth remembering a day, and an intentional offence is sufficiently despised in less time.

The day before his death, I had come down from London to Birmingham to see him. He had a pipe of Turkish length, the bowl resting on a chair near him, so that he could smoke at will, and I sat on the bedside and smoked with him. He spoke at intervals of my mother. She ever seemed a living mercy in the chamber of the sick. By day and by night she was ever the same patient, kind, unwearying ministrant—unconscious of the obligations of gratitude she created. His voice had its old melody. Once he said, "It is a long time to wait to die, but please God not long." His natural activity of thought still remained with him, and dying seemed to him as something he had still to do. Shortly afterwards the end came.

During all the years of my youth I never remember to have heard my father use an expression which implied that he had ever heard of religion. He never said anything against it, nor anything for it. He left all that to my mother. He seemed to think that she had enough religion for both of them, and in that he was right. He had a pagan mind, and his thoughts dwelt on the human side of life.

We laid him in St. Paul's Churchyard, the burying-place of his relatives, in the grave with "Uncle John," the Yorick of the family. The Rev. Mr. Scarlett read the Church service. In all things we consulted our mother's wishes.

I called upon Mr. Davenport, the rector of St. John's Church, which stood at the back of my father's house, to thank him for his kindness in visiting my father at our request in his illness, and in speaking consoling words to my mother about him. The Rev. Mr. Buckingham, an evangelical preacher, whose chapel my mother attended, I also called upon, to express my sense of the liberal notions of God's dealings with His creatures, that my mother had heard from him, which had resulted in a more cheerful faith than she had been wont to have. Afterwards the Rev. William Sharman, a Wesleyan minister, who

in later years I knew as a valued friend, was a no less kindly and beneficent visitor to my mother. Indeed, he was a more merciful visitant, as he held views of universal salvation, more genial and hopeful than the dubious and anxious tenets of one of the Elect, as my mother hoped she was and deserved to be.†

After the death of my father, I advised my mother to rejoin the Rev. John Angell James's Church. She acquired what she called "convictions," under Mr. James's ministry, which she had attended twenty-five years. Mr. Buckingham, her minister above named, was leaving Birmingham, it was therefore I suggested her returning to Mr. James's Church, and I offered to accompany her to Carr's Lane, which I accordingly did; and on Sunday, May 15, 1853, I entered the chapel after an absence of twenty years. What vicissitudes of religious experiences had I gone through since I last walked along its familiar galleries! What an utter, an unforeseen change had my life undergone since then! There was the well-known clock, whose tardy hands I had watched often wearily from the Sunday-school gallery, and the organ with its monotonous peals, which first made me think music an invention for the punishment of our sins.<sup>\*</sup> There, too, were those formal, dull ground-glass windows, which did not let in even the merciful blaze of day; and I used to envy the cheerful sun above which dwelt so high in the sky, and was never cooped up in a Sunday School, but looked out over all the world, even on Robinson Crusoe's Island, and was not forced to go to chapel on the bright Sunday morning. There, also, I recognized a face almost in every pew which I had known before—faces I never saw smile, and which now looked as though they had never smiled since we met before. How should those who had read believingly the "Anxious Inquirer" ever smile? To my disappointment Mr. James did not preach that night, being absent in London, and I never heard, as I wished to do, his mellifluous eloquence once more.

Nobody seemed to regard me as strong in my youth. When

<sup>\*</sup> In Mr. J. A. James's "History of Nonconformity," he remarks that when the organ was proposed, he said, "Let me control it; it must aid the singing, and not be employed for the display of the organist's skill"—or words to that effect. Yet it might be that the skill of a great organist would be no less honourable to human nature, no less acceptable to heaven, than the sermon of the preacher. Art is as holy as "Independency."

I was a boy of seven or eight I heard it said of me, "it was doubtful whether I should be reared." Nothing, however, happened. Then it was said that "the age of thirteen or fourteen would try me." Being found actively alive after that period, the years of "nineteen or twenty" were fixed upon as the "critical time." As I obviously went on living, the prophets of a short life had their opinion that "twenty-nine or thirty" would decide my fate. Burns, Shelley, and Byron had died before mid-age, but as I was not a poet I felt no uneasiness on that account, so that it was long after before it occurred to me that I was really going to live. I was not an unregarding hearer of those observations. I remember mentioning them to my tutor, Daniel Wright, who said he had a friend who had been similarly warned, who actually had consumption all his life, and yet died at seventy-four. He knew the conditions under which he could live, and observed them. Mr. Wright gave me the first confidence in living that I received. My mother, like many pious people of that period, believed that the "three score years and ten" of the Psalmist were the natural end of human life. Many believing persons in pious circles would have lived longer but for this impression. My mother was perplexed at living seven years beyond that time. Mr. Bright seemed to be somewhat of the same opinion in saying:—"What Mr. Schnadhorst or Mr. Harris quoted about the long continuance of the connection between Birmingham and myself is a matter that is extremely doubtful. I think the Psalmist was more right when he made the suggestion which everybody has heard of, and most people come to think seriously of, when he spoke of the threescore years and ten, which means that a man at threescore years and ten is inducted into the order of old men."<sup>1</sup>

After the predictions recounted as to my early decease, it was unimaginable to me that I should be writing at seventy-five in pleasant health. Nor would it happen to me had I been robust. I can count thirty or forty colleagues, all stronger than myself, who died by my side. They could live or work, as strong persons usually do, in a regardless manner, until the machine of life breaks down at once. Temperance in all things, save work, became to me a necessity, and proved a security.

<sup>1</sup> Reply to address to the deputation in acknowledging the address presented to him at One Ash, Rochdale, on his seventieth birthday, November 16, 1881.



## CHAPTER V.

### *EARLY DAYS.*

(1818-25.)

THE business-like way of beginning a biography is to state when and where the subject of it was born, though it is very rarely that the reader sees any necessity for such particulars. As, however, they impart a necessary air of veracity to the story, I give them, merely premising that I had no business to be born at all, neither when I was, nor where I was, nor of whom I was—if without filial impiety I may say so. Parents seldom own it, but many like me have seen aspects of this untoward world when they have felt that they ought to apologize to their children for causing their appearance in it. My mother had many children ; she reared eleven ; but I soon came to see how much better it would have been for her—how much more enjoyment, peace, repose, and freedom from anxiety would have fallen to her—had her family been limited to three or four children.

No. 1, Inge Street, Birmingham, where I was born, still stands, but in a dead street now.<sup>1</sup> The grime of smoke, of decay and comfortlessness, are upon it. Then it was fresh and bright. At No. 2 (next door) Mrs. Massey lived. She was a very large old lady, who sold cakes and tarts, which lay enticingly in a low, broad, bow window. Near hers was a house (No. 5) with green silk curtains, where there resided a neat, little, clean, bright-eyed old lady, who used to charm away warts, and other small maladies. I was under her good-

<sup>1</sup> The Inge family, who own or owned the land on which Inge Street and the next street, Thorpe Street, stand, are natives of Thorpe Constantine, in Staffordshire.—Daniel Baker, Balsall Heath, in *Birmingham Weekly Post*.

natured but ineffectual hands, at times, for warts ; but I found nothing clear them off like a fall at leap-frog, when the sprawling hands came up quite free from those intractable protuberances. Higher up the street (No. 12) lived Mr. Hawksford, a baker and flour seller ; a quiet, placid, pale-faced, mild-mannered man, who, I always thought, looked like God. The first idea my mother gave me of God made me think He was like that miller, who never smiled or spoke, but was always kind and gentle to me—when I took pies to be baked. The idea comes back to my mind as fresh as when it was first formed in my childish, unsuspecting, unthinking fancy. Dr. Mansel had not then delivered his Bampton Lectures, and no ideas of the "Absolute" and the "Unconditioned" had been heard of in Inge Street. Next to the mild, paternal miller, lived a plain, busy, rosy-faced widow, who had no shop window, but kept the best grocer's shop in those parts—where the butter was always fresh. Opposite to her lived a Mr. Roberts, a pleasant-minded Irishman, who would have been as rotund as Falstaff, if the business of grinding glasses for opticians, which he followed, had been a little more prosperous. The history and avocations of everybody in this street are still in my mind.

A little above the wart-witch, with the green silk curtains, dwelt "Sally Padmore." Her house had two steps to it, and the raised floor always delighted me. She often came and nursed us when ill. Well or ill, we gave her trouble enough, kind, patient old soul : but it was the trouble of attachment. She was never angry. She was the only old woman I knew in my youth whose kindly voice never changed. Household trouble came to her, and for three days she was lost. Going one night into an outhouse, I saw her hanging up dead. Her ghost was clear before me. It was shadowy, blue, and well defined. There was no doubt she had killed herself somewhere. How could any one see her ghost if she was not dead ? It was the first ghost I had seen, and I was not likely to forget it, and I knew her too well to mistake it. Next day, while I was alarming all who would listen to me, with the supernatural news, word came that she had returned home as bright and active as usual. This experience weakened my confidence in ghosts, which was implicit till then. Two doors below dear, kind "Old Sally" was the home of a stalwart workman given

to politics. I saw his nose chopped off by a soldier in the Bull Ring Chartist Riots many years later. But the reader will not care to hear about Inge Street and its occupants for ever.

Before our door where I was born stood, on the opposite side, a considerable clump of well-grown trees, amid which was a hatter's working shop. On the adjacent corner of Hurst Street stood the Fox Tavern, as it stands now ; but then the sign had been newly painted by a one-armed, short, quick-stepping, nervous-faced, dapper artist ; and a very wonderful fox it seemed to me. The sharp-nosed, bushy-tailed animal was rushing to cover—on the sign. I had never seen a fox or a cover, except on that sign. I had only seen a workshop, and I envied the fox who had such a paradise to flee to. Yet we were not without glimpses of real nature about us. Below the Fox Tavern was a "Green" ; at the bottom was a garden belonging to a house with a gateway, where one of my father's sisters lived. The garden fence was not a dead wall, but a low, wood paling, through which children could see the flowers in the garden. From the end of Inge Street the trees of the parsonage ground made a small wood before us, and apparently in their midst, but really beyond them, arose the spire of the "Old Church"—as we called St. Martin's. On summer afternoons and moonlight nights the church spire, rising above the nestling trees, presented an aspect of a verdant village church in the midst of the busy workshop town. Down through the "Green," the way led to Lady Well Walk, where more gardens lay, and the well was wide, clear, and deep. Hundreds of times did I fetch water from it. We had a pump in our own yard, but we did not think much of the pump—and we did it no injustice. Gone now—gone long ago—is the glory of well, and the Lady's Walk, and the "Green," and the Parsonage Ground, and the trees, and church spire. The spire is still about, but the sight of it has been hidden by buildings of every order of deformity. Inge Street, now, looking down from the Horse Fair end, is, as it were, the entrance to a coal-pit, which, when I first knew it, appeared as the entrance to a sylvan glen.

In the midst of these scenes and persons described, was the beginning of things to me. If I go back on the principle Prospero proposed to Miranda and state—

"By what—house or person?  
Of anything the image tell that  
Hath kept in my remembrance.

How  
That it lives in my mind ; what see I else,  
In the dark backward and abysm of time ? "

That will be far enough.

The first time I was conscious of being in this world, I was sitting upon a rug on the floor. A figure in a black dress was vanishing through an open door. In front another open door disclosed a road. Trees were bending in the wind, and there were sunlight and shadow on the ground. I did not know that there was a sound in the world nor a living being save the servant in the black dress. The quiet shade seemed sad, and the sentiment crept into my mind. It could not arise from disappointment, I being too young for coherent thought ; nor dissatisfaction with the world in general, which would have been as impertinent as premature at that early age. However, it came—the feeling of sadness was there. That scene was the beginning of life to me.

It appears, from what I afterwards came to know, that at my birth my mother wished me to be called "George," after my father. On the other hand, my aunts on my father's side wished me to be called "Jacob," after my grandfather. As neither side would give in, both names were given to me—bearing which I became an unconscious peacemaker in the family. For myself I never liked the name of Jacob. When I came to have a preference I preferred that of Esau, who was an honest man of wise ways. A modern writer on Scriptural names explains that Jacob means, "active investigation of belief." If this be true, it would reconcile me to it ; but the recorded antecedents and behaviour of Jacob in the Old Testament are not at all to my mind.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *ARTIZAN LIFE SIXTY YEARS AGO.*

(1830.)

BEFORE my mother's horn button business ceased, I learned to wind the copper wire on a flat steel turned by a lathe, to stamp the coil into shank form under a press, and to cut the shanks with shears which often strained my little hands. Afterwards I had to stick the shanks into circular pieces of perforated damp horn, called "moles"—hammer them in—rivet them in a vice, and file them. The buttons were then shaken in a long bag, which dried and polished them. They were then strung into grosses, and delivered to the merchants who ordered them. All the old processes are still distinctly in my mind.

It was an attraction to me to watch at a tinman's shop window, and see him make lanterns. At length he consented to take me, when the afternoon school was over, to work through the evening soldering the handles on lanterns. I was a small boy then, and though I often burned my fingers with the soldering iron, I earned in time as much as 3s. 6d. per week piece-work. Afterwards I persuaded my father to take me with him to the Eagle Foundry, from a desire to be at work. I must have been very young then, as I remember asking my father to let me hold his hand as I went along by his side in the early morning ; and his hand, enclosing mine, was a new sensation of pleasure, and seemed to put fresh life into me. The time of being at the foundry was six o'clock, and I was often half asleep as we went up Suffolk Street on the way to Broad Street, where the foundry<sup>\*</sup> was, and where I was taught to be a whitesmith, working in white iron and burnished steel.

<sup>\*</sup> Foundry is a name usually applied to a casting shop ; but the Eagle Foundry included engine works and the manufacture of most heavy things in

I see now the long, dull foundry yard as I saw it for thirteen years from the window at which I worked. On the right is the little house where the warehouseman lived, who had charge of the premises at night : and, on the same side, the waggon-way leading to the furnaces, the mills, and the casting shops. The warehouse and show-rooms filled up the right of the yard to the gates. On the left were ramshackle sheds for storing sheet iron. Piles of wrought iron bars lay on the ground. A cold-looking iron pump stood close by, and heaps of old cast iron broken up for blasting. The foundry cart is loading near the stable door, and at the top, through the open gateway, the town people are passing, and the distant sunshine falls upon the broad road outside. The sunshine always seemed apart from us.

One workman at the foundry was a tall, lean old man : he was very gaunt, and I think never had enough to eat ; but I had more respect for him than any other man there. His business was to do the forged wrought-iron work for kitchen ranges and black iron stoves. Each man made his own tools, and this old workman's pliers and tongs were the most perfect of any one's ; everything he forged was excellent in fitness and finish, and, though he was paid no better than if he had done his work slovenly, he never abated a blow on that account. He had an honest passion for perfect work. He was a Staffordshire man. I cannot recall his name, or I would give it to his honour. He had a daughter named Esther. She was tall like her father, but did not remind us in any other way of the Esther whose beauty pleaded for the Jews. She was the only woman employed at the works. She had a little shop with a fireplace and doorway only, in which she black-leaded stoves, which she did as conscientiously as her father forged at the anvil. She was always ready for work. I never remember to have seen her sit down.

There were two members of the firm—one was Mr. Samuel Smith, a Unitarian, a placid gentleman. The men were always glad when it fell to him to pay them, as he had a kindly word

iron, and had many whitesmiths, blacksmiths, and engine smiths upon the premises, which had a frontage in Broad Street extending, on one hand, to Mr. Rabone's, the merchant's, and, on the other, to Mr. Crompton's, the copper dealer's. In depth the foundry extended nearly to the canal in the Old Wharf.

for them, and would sometimes make them small advances when the wages of the piece-workers fell low. William Hawkes was the other partner, to whom no workman made any request. He had a brother Timothy, who was tall and slender, and who had abundant black hair, and a Jewish cast of countenance, quite unlike his brother William, who had red hair, and not much of it. Timothy, when about thirty years of age, became a Methodist, and grew quite fanatical in his new persuasion ; but so far from making him morose, it seemed rather to increase his kindly nature. A workman was caught by the machinery in the mill, and his leg torn from his body. He kept his bed until his death, living a year or more, and Mr. Timothy used to go and sit with him, and pray with him, and make small gifts for his comfort. His brother William—the acting “Master” as he was called—was mainly an unpleasant person. He was exacting, and always spoke with harshness. I saw old men who were in such terror at his approach that they would strike their hands instead of the chisel they were using, and were afraid of dismissal or reduction of wages in consequence of the incapacity which he witnessed, and which his presence caused. Piece-workers and day-workers were so continually subjected to reduced prices and wages that they never felt certain on Monday morning what they would receive on Saturday evening. There were no trade intimations where other employment might be obtained—no energy in seeking it—there was continual resentment, sullenness, and disgust, but no independence, or self-dependence. If a man saved a little money, he carefully concealed that he had done so ; if he could afford to dress cleanly and moderately well, he was afraid to do it, as his wages were sure to be reduced. I remember a fine, well-built young man coming to the foundry from Sheffield, where there was always independence among the workmen. He undertook the deadliest work in the mill, the grinding. There was great astonishment when he entered the foundry gates wearing a well-fitting, handsome suit of black clothes. The master was as much astonished at his audacity as the men were. He changed his clothes in the mill and put on a rough grinder's dress, mounted before the deadly stones, and worked like a splashed, mud-covered Hercules—but he would wash, dress, and leave the foundry like a gentleman. His employer at once

concluded that he had given him too much wages ; but the moment a reduction was proposed, he resented it, drew the money due to him, and went away entirely. It was almost the only example of independence I remember to have seen.

One incident occurred which filled me with lasting indignation. The younger brother of a man named Barton who had been years employed in the mill was found by William Hawkes (the acting partner), one meal-time, removing a file from one of the shops. He was an industrious, well-conducted young fellow—he had not taken the file away, which was worth about 7d., though he probably intended taking it. He was apprehended, and transported for ten years, on the evidence of the master. A week's imprisonment would have been sufficient penalty for a first offence in a mill where theft was unknown. The arbitrary and continual reduction of prices by the master was a far more serious theft of the earnings of all the men. That was the way in which employers behaved generally, so far as I knew them. Mr. Hawkes, nevertheless, did kind things in his harsh way which were intended for the welfare of the men, and I used to compare him to a sheep-dog, who kept the wolf from attacking them, but bit the sheep himself when they turned aside. I resolved not to be bitten, and it filled my mind with hatred to see poor hard-working men about me subjected to the process.

The condition of mechanics who worked in little workshops of their own was bad. They had to sell their small manufactures to merchants. The men who lived in the town, and those who came miles into it, with the produce of their week's work, were kept hanging about the merchants' warehouses until nine, ten, and often eleven o'clock on Saturday night, before they were paid their money ; and their wives had to make their little marketings after their husbands reached home. There seemed no end to this, and no way out of it. There were no Saturday half-holidays thought of then.

There stands now, or stood when I last was there, a factory or warehouse at the head of Lady Well Walk, where in my childhood was an open, spacious coal-yard, kept by a Mrs. Gillybrand. On dark, cold, drizzling Saturday nights children were sometimes sent for a barrow of coals for Sunday fires. They used to stand by a brazier fire blazing in the coal-yard—

sometimes for an hour waiting for barrows to come in—turning themselves round, being half frozen and half toasted. At the Fox Tavern, and at the mild, white-faced baker's, loads of coals were at times delivered. No coal came round in sacks at other houses, and a number of small barrows were kept at Gillybrand's, where buyers did their own cartage, or rather barrowage. As, on Saturday nights, wages, as I have said, were paid late, barrows were in demand often until midnight. A level barrow-load was 6d., a full one 8d. The buyer had just what the vendor threw in. No measure or scales were used. When a barrow was to be had it was trundled home. I pitied those who had to go out in the dark and cold on this last errand. I dreaded it as a negro would being sent out in the snow. I did not know then that these were the "good old times" of which I should afterwards hear foolish persons prate.

Though there were no trades unions in my time among whitesmiths, I could see, even then, that excellence of workmanship on the part of a man, intelligent enough to know its value, was a source of independence. There were two brothers at the foundry named Threstlecock—one did the great forgings for the steam engines, the other fitted the engines—a third man, very large and fat, with a small bullet head, and Welsh impetuosity of manner, made the great castings, which sometimes consumed a ton of molten iron. These men ventured to dress somewhat better than others, and took more liberty as to time of coming or leaving. They obtained higher wages for their work, and no attempt at abatement was tried upon them. My father and one or two other men were all that came within this class, and he would have fared still better but for his known attachment to the place where he had been longer than any other man. His children took him away at last that he might end his days in sunshine and rest, but he doubtless would have lived longer had they left it optional with him to linger about the old place at will. His pleasure was in workmanship.

Long before that time he bought some newly-invented machinery for turning bone buttons, hired steam power at the Baskerville Mill, and placed me in charge of it. Working one day, leaning closely over my work, the "chock" caught a silk handkerchief, of which the ends were loose, round my neck, I was drawn down in a moment, and nearly strangled. Fortu-

nately the mill band turning the lathe was a loose one, and I had power to stop the rotation for a short time, but could not extricate myself. Mr. Roberts, the Irish optician, who lived in our street, was grinding spectacle-glasses in an adjoining room, and heard my calls for help, stopped the machinery, and unwound me, just as the "chock" was beating into my throat ; otherwise my head would have been wrung off, and I should have been an observer of the operation.

By the time I was thirteen or fourteen I made a small bright steel fire-gate, with all the improvements then known, as a chimney ornament for my mother. All the drilling in the foundry was done by hand : as this was very laborious, I devised a perpendicular drill to be worked by mill power. At that time I had never seen one. My delight was in mechanical contrivance. Not being able to buy mathematical instruments, I made two pairs of compasses for pencil and pen—one with double point and slide, hammered out of bits of sheet iron. My tutor being pleased with them caused them to be laid on the table at the annual distribution of prizes of the Mechanics' Institution. This led to my being publicly presented with a proper case of mathematical instruments, given by Mr. Isaac Pitman, the inventor of phonography. Mr. Lloyd, a banker in Birmingham, caused George Stephenson, one night when he was at the House of Commons, to put my name down on his staff of young engineers. I was very proud to have my name on his list, though nothing came of it, Mr. Lloyd having probably no opportunity of again calling the attention of the famous engineer to it : and I had no other friend in communication with him. What a different career mine had been had I been called up !

Mechanical employment seems to me far preferable to any other open to men in cities. Had there been in my time means of higher education in evening classes, when degrees could be won without University attendance—impossible to me—I should have remained in the workshop. There is more independence in pursuits of handicraft, and more time for original thought, than in clerkship or business. That which made me desirous of escaping from the workshop was the hopelessness of sufficient and certain wages, and the idea of personal subjection associated with it.

It has sometimes seemed to me that I was born with steel and books in my blood. About the books I am not so clear, though I have made many after their kind. But that I had a mechanical faculty beyond the average in my circle was admitted there. I could tell the quality of steel and other metals just as others can tell textile fabrics at a glance. When a youth I would fit and finish bright steel work better than men twice my age, and who had twice my wages. My father, who came of a race of armourers, had, with other attainments, skill in forging. Sheffield men, who were the best artificers in my time where I worked as a whitesmith, always came to my father to do their difficult forging. I often swung the striking hammer for my father at the anvil, and to this day I have more pleasure and aptitude for that form of physical exercise than for any other. Good, well-made, well-contrived, well-finished machinery always gives me as much enjoyment as a good painting.

The capacity to work as a whitesmith or engineer has always been a source of pride to me. Anything I could do in my mechanic days I could do ever after. It gave me a sense of independence. If speaking, teaching, or writing failed me, I was always ready for the bench.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *LEADERS OF THE FIRST BIRMINGHAM POLITICAL UNION.*

(1830-3.)

THE most remarkable Birmingham man of that day (1830) was Thomas Attwood. He was Royalist and Radical, not remarkable for intellectual strength, but had dignity of presence and a persuasive and orotund manner of speaking. He was the founder and moving spirit of the Birmingham Political Union. Being a banker, he imparted to it an air of monetary responsibility. He and Joshua Scholefield were the first members for Birmingham. Attwood was the member for the town who was most popular with women. When he was canvassing they were abundant in the courts and streets. He not only kissed the children—he kissed their mothers. At one election he was reputed to have kissed eight thousand women. Though a leader of the masses, he was no democrat, and would have induced the Political Union to accept a £20 franchise, but for the refusal of the more robust politicians of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who, like the late Sir Joseph Cowen, were followers of Lord Durham. They held a great meeting on the Town Moor, and declared for a £10 franchise. But for the Newcastle men, the electoral constituency of England would have been “confined to £20 householders.” The Birmingham Political Union was the most conspicuous force which impelled the Reform Bill of 1832, such as it was. Attwood had a theory of currency which he thought would bring prosperity to the people, and he sought a Reformed House of Commons, mainly because he thought he could thereby carry his financial theory into law.

Robert Owen, in like manner, resolved to appeal to the people to carry his social scheme of "Villages of Co-operation,"<sup>\*</sup> when Lords Liverpool, Lauderdale, and Sidmouth failed him. Cobden and Bright, with a more genuine political sympathy with the people, were for a broader measure of electoral reform, as better calculated to carry and maintain free trade. All the £10 voters of Birmingham did was to send a banker and a wealthy merchant to Parliament. In doing this they had the justification of political gratitude. Yet George Edmonds was the man who had greater claims than either.

Joshua Scholefield, Thomas Attwood's colleague in the representation of the town, was a better Liberal than Attwood. He was a small rotund man, with fire and purpose, and a ruddy complexion. He menaced the Government with marching on London with a hundred thousand men to inquire why the Reform Bill lingered so long. The Duke of Wellington took notice of the projected visit. He was not afraid of us, but did not want us in London.

In later years, Joshua's son William was elected member for the borough. He was a man of gentle manners, of good commercial knowledge and authority, who carried through Parliament the Industrial Partnerships Bill, which first made participation of profits with workmen possible. When in Parliament he had a residence at Runnymede Island, on which Magna Charta was signed, which was enviable. Runnymede was historic, but Runnymede was damp. I met him frequently at the House of Commons in his later years. His health was failing, but he was judicious in attendance, which he limited in accordance with his strength. When a division was due, he infallibly appeared.

Lawrence Street Chapel, where the Socialist meetings were held in those days, was built by the Southcottians. Mr. Bradley, a tobacconist, was the chief supporter of the little church. It was he who bought the silver cradle in which the little Shiloh was to be rocked, which Joanna in due time was to bring forth, but never did. The last occupation of the chapel (1890) is by the Kyrle Society. The peculiarity of the Southcottian leaders, which excited more prejudice against them than their harmless

<sup>\*</sup> So far as I have found they were first given this name by the *Black Dwarf* in 1824.

Messianic expectations, was that they wore long beards. Ignorance, always intolerant, resented this liberty of differing from their neighbours even in so small a thing as wearing their natural beards. No one understood then the truth of Schiller's aphorism that "toleration only comes with larger information."

George Frederick Muntz, who afterwards became member for Birmingham, was the only other man in the town who wore a beard.<sup>1</sup> He was, when he became member for the borough, the first civilian who wore a beard in the House of Commons—a military officer only was accorded the limited liberty of wearing a moustache. Mr. Muntz would have been insulted for wearing a beard, but he carried a thick malacca cane, which it was known he would apply to the shoulders of any person who affronted him. It was this which protected him from ridicule in Birmingham and in the House of Commons. He was the most powerful and resolute Radical in the town. A story told of him in my youth was, that going home one night to his house in Soho, he was attacked by two robbers. He knocked them down and brought them both into town and gave them into custody. A local writer, one Joseph Allday, was editor of a paper called the *Argus*, which he enlivened by offensive personalities. Mr. Muntz, being compromised by some remarks, went down to the office, seized Mr. Allday by the collar, drew him over the counter into the middle of the street, when the editor found that personal allusion to Mr. Muntz was liable to be tempered with an application of his malacca cane. The assault came before the magistrates, with what results I do not remember. In the later days of his membership, Mr. Muntz was not edifying on the platform, and swore in his speeches. Mr. William Cope tells of kindly acts of his. One day meeting an old woman in Livery Street wheeling coals up the hill, he took the barrow in hand and wheeled it up for her.

Philip Henry Muntz, a younger brother of George Frederick, also wore a beard, when he came to have one, but his hair was not dark like his brother's. He had the same brusqueness of manner, but less coarseness. I heard him make his first speech in public. He afterwards became member for the town. They were the two fighting Radicals. It is singular that the only

<sup>1</sup> In after years George Dawson.

descendant of the family in Parliament should be a Tory. I suppose there is a fatty degeneration of the understanding in well-fed Liberals, as sometimes occurs otherwise in too well-fed men.

Thomas Clutton Salt, a vehement member of the Political Union, had an ornate style which entertained, but left little impression on his audience. His quality was best seen in an address which he issued to the town, which now has the merit of showing that Birmingham women took interest in politics before John Stuart Mill's influence urged them to organize themselves as a separate power in the State. One passage in Mr. Salt's address said "the slave spirit crouches in fear—the tyrant spirit contrives new oppressions—the Jew spirit tortures for gold ; therefore do women meddle with politics ;" and more to the same effect. Each paragraph gave impassioned reasons "why women meddle with politics."

Though no one then thought of giving women any political rights, both parties were ready to avail themselves of their political influence, and when the Liberals of Birmingham were invoking the aid of the women of progress, the Tories of Norwich were issuing the following address :—

"TO THE LADIES OF NORWICH.

"None but the brave deserve the fair.

"If ever the sweets of social virtue, the warmth of honest zeal, the earnings of industry, the prosperity of trade, had any influence in the female breast, you have now a happy opportunity of exercising it to the advantage of *your* country—*your* cause. If ever the feelings of a parent, wife, sister, friend, or lover, had a sympathy with *public virtue*, now is *your* time to indulge the *tender passion*. If ever you felt for the ruin and disgrace of England, and for the *miseries and depravities* of the obnoxious Reform Bill, you are called on by the most tender and affectionate tie in nature to exert *your* persuasive influence on the minds of a father, brother, husband, or lover ; tell them not to seek filial duty, congenial regard, matrimonial comfort, nor *tender compliance*, till they have saved *your* country from perdition ! *posterity from slavery* History furnishes us with instances of *female patriotism* equal to any in the page of war and politics. Oh ! may the generous and beatific charm of female persuasions prevail with the *citizens of Norwich*, to espouse the cause of liberty, of

"STORMONT AND SCARLETT."

It never occurred to these eloquent adjurers that if women were thus able to exercise political influence they were entitled to use it for themselves.

After the Reform Bill was carried the Union dissolved itself, as the Anti-Corn Law League subsequently did when the Corn Laws were repealed. Mr. G. F. Muntz proposed that the Union should be hung up like a clean gun, to be taken down if need arose—a figure of speech suitable to a gun-making town. The gun grew rusty on its nail.

Robert Kelly Douglas was an active leader of the Union. He was spoken of as the editor of *The Birmingham Journal*. A card of membership which I held—which I still have—is signed with his familiar initials, "R. K. D., secretary," bearing the words, "Birmingham Political Union, Instituted 1830—Revived 1837." His bold, clear handwriting was like his speeches. He was fluent, relevant, and forcible. He was tall, slender, with a fine head of grey hair, and of dignified, cultivated manners.

At the great meeting known as the "Gathering of the Unions," 200,000 on Newhall Hill sang the Call,

" Over mountain, over plain,  
Echoing wide, from sea to sea,  
Peals, and shall not peal in vain,  
The trumpet call of liberty."

Then others made reply,

" Lo ! we answer ; see ! we come !  
Quick at freedom's holy call ;  
We come, we come, we come, we come,  
To do the glorious work of all ;  
And hark we raise from sea to sea,  
Our sacred watchword Liberty ! "

There were nine stanzas containing fifty-four lines in all. Never did political meeting so large sing a song so long, before or since in this world.

The Rev. Hugh Hutton put up a sonorous prayer. Unitarians in those days preached in Johnsonian sentences, and used more vowels than any other religionists. Only Unitarian ministers at that time would pray for Liberals, or who would pray among them. We had a Catholic priest, the Rev. T. M. M'Donnel, a member of the council of the Political Union ; a tall, clear, articulate, well-informed speaker, with grey hair and public spirit ; but he never did what Mr. Hutton did. A Birmingham meeting never asked him. They would not imagine

that a Catholic could have got a blessing down from heaven if he tried. The one leader who had most force of character, and who was best instructed on Liberal principle, was George Edmonds, a schoolmaster and solicitor. He had the protruding underlip, the physical sign of capacity for oratory, as might be seen in Lord Brougham, George Thompson, and other orators of mark. There are orators in plenty without this characteristic, but to those who have, it gives a sort of prehensile advantage over an audience. More than an orator with a commanding voice and measured force of delivery, Edmonds was a Radical thinker, and friend of Jonathan Wooler in the days of the *Black Dwarf*. Edmonds was tried with Major Cartwright and Wooler, and sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, for promoting the election of Sir Charles Wolseley, Bart., as M.P. for Birmingham, 1820, no Speaker's writ authorizing it. Jonathan Wooler concluded the twelfth volume of the *Black Dwarf* in 1824. In his "Final Address" he states that "he commenced the work under the idea that there was a public in Britain devotedly attached to Parliamentary reform. This was an error. It is true that hundreds of thousands have petitioned and clamoured for reform, but the event has proved what the *Black Dwarf* treated as a calumny, that they only clamoured for bread . . . and were not reformers, but bubbles thrown up in the fermentation of society. . . . The majority has decided in its crueller moments 'for things as they are.'" Yet within eight years the great Reform Bill was carried by, what even Wellington had to admit, was the universal demand of the country. This is a remarkable instance of that political despair on the part of an insurgent politician, resembling the darkness which precedes the dawn.

When Birmingham became a Parliamentary borough, Edmonds came forward as a candidate, but was requested to stand aside in favour of Mr. Scholefield. In the day of triumph it is seldom that a constituency selects as its representative the man who laboured for it in perilous, unfriended, and apathetic days. When such a man claims recognition, he is told that he is dividing the Liberal *interest*—which appears not to lie that way. Ultimately, Mr. Edmonds was made Clerk of the Peace. The last time I saw him he was one of an audience at a dis-

cussion I held with an adversary in the town. There was no person among its public men of the days of my youth whose presence could give me so much pleasure.

The chief Radical critic of the Union, who better understood the principle of democracy and cared more for it than the leaders, except George Edmonds, was one George Russell, who made a little fortune in Moor Street by printing and selling Catnatch songs. Had Macaulay visited Birmingham he would have gone over Mr. Russell's copious ballad store with delight. He had the finest collection in all the Midlands. Unfortunately, Russell, like Mr. Corbett (contemporaneous with him in Radical agitation), had a querulous manner and acted on the Pauline maxim of being "instant in season and out of season," and as he was generally "out," he was disliked. But he had the root of the matter in him in political thoroughness. He left £12,000 to found a secular school, of which he designated me as the teacher; but the bequest was disputed. I was examined in the case, but, not being able to take oath, Mr. Arthur Ryland, the Commissioner of the Inquiry, accepted my affirmation. All the same, legal objection could be taken to it. The bequest was annulled. Secular teaching was held to be hostile to Christianity, and much against the validity of the bequest.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF BIRMINGHAM MEN.*

(1830-6.)

THE habit I had acquired of frequenting chapels and missionary meetings led me to attend political assemblies. This further enlarged my views of life and duty, which the religion taught me had hidden from me.

The political impulses by which Birmingham had become distinguished had quickened thought of the human kind in relation to this world. For five years I was a scholar in the Carr's Lane Sunday Schools, yet save Watts's hymns and reading in the Bible, I had learned nothing. There was a sand class for seven or eight boys, in which lessons in rudimentary writing were given. But beyond this, secular instruction in these schools did not go. Once the Rev. John Angell James, the pastor, delivered a week-night public address, in which he counselled young men to be content in the station and with the lot which Providence had assigned them. Dissent was no better than the Church as regarded secular progress. When I heard Mr. James's counsel, I believed it. It was logical Christian doctrine I knew, and I could see that if acted upon, the Political Union was an organized sin—as its object was to alter and raise the condition of the people. Had Mr. James himself acted upon his own principle, he would not have been a preacher.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. James, who was born at Blandford, Dorset, in 1785, was intended for commercial life, but was advised by the Rev. Dr. Bennett to study for the ministry. There was no great thinker in those days like Mr. Ruskin to teach the world that piety and progress were the same. Mr. Ruskin has told us that, "If no effort be made to discover, in the course of their early training,

Birmingham being in the heart of the Midlands of England, its people have insularity of character as well as of race. The various nations of invaders who, for more than a thousand years, bestowed on England their malevolent presence, no doubt penetrated more or less to Birmingham. But the British founders and their descendants probably kept substantial occupancy of the interior of the country. Our furious incursionists doubtless left behind them turbulent additions to the population—perpetuating a like spirit along the invaded shores. Thus to this day the coast-land population show energy and unrest of character. The Midlanders have steadier attachment to independence and to ways of their own. Insisting upon liberty as an ancient inheritance, they regard as aliens any who would disturb their exercise of it.

Still in my mind is the perfect surprise with which I first became aware of having the instinct of race. When the Crimean War came it was popular. It was found out by the people that we were committed to fighting somebody. Mr. Bright, Mr. Cobden, and a few other great politicians fully understood that we ought not to be fighting at all. The hereditary instinct of a warlike people once awakened, is quite sufficient to make any conflict popular. There was much less political intelligence then than now, and hardly any political conscience as regarded foreign nations. When news came that my countrymen were fighting in the trenches of Sebastopol, my wish was that they might win, whether right or wrong. The great French war had ceased two years before I was born. England had never been at war in my time. There had been no inspiration of battle in the people within my experience. The martial spirit slumbered as though it were dead in the land, yet I had it and knew it not. At any lull in the Crimean carnage, I was anxious that diplomacy should intervene to terminate it, but while we were fighting I wished the English to win. It was not right that we should win if we were wrong.

for what services the youth of a nation are individually qualified : nor any care taken to place those who have unquestionably proved their fitness for certain functions, in the offices they could best fulfil—then to call the confused wreck of social order and life brought about by malicious collision and competition, an arrangement of Providence, is quite one of the most insolent and wicked ways in which it is possible to take the name of God in vain.”—RUSKIN: “Time and Tide,” pp. 7, 8.—1867.

It means an ill organization of international affairs when any one succeeds who is in the wrong—whether an individual or a nation. Yet an unknown and unsuspected instinct of race set me wishing that, while fighting was going on, we might succeed somehow or anyhow. I do not justify the sentiment, but I own to having had it.

Such was the effect of insularity of birth and race that I for a long time mistrusted all people not English—yet never disliking them as persons; for their physical difference in appearance and alien ways were always attractive to me. What I mistrusted was their judgment and opinion, until experience taught me that sentiments of justice are, in the main, the same among all people, although their way of displaying it is so different that you doubt whether they know what it is. Insularity of position gives self-containment of character to a people unused to consulting opinion outside themselves. They hold their views with obstinacy because they are theirs, and their first instinct is to distrust the judgment of those who differ from them. If they manifest narrowness of view, which comes from self-sufficiency, it gives intensity to their character, and they maintain their opinion with unity and force, and their determination can be counted upon in any contest in which they engage. Judging from myself, I regarded the coast towns of England as though they were inhabited by alien races. When Birmingham men enter upon political agitation, the reader will think them likely to be resolute in it. During the active years of the Political Union my days were passed within a few yards of its office. I knew its leaders in the street and on the platform, and their conduct accorded with the impression of Birmingham men herein described. The legend of the town, adopted on its incorporation, is rightly and creditably "**Forward**"—the family motto of the Duke of Queensberry.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *ORATORS WHO CAME OUR WAY.*

(1837.)

IN 1831 a few words on a sheet of paper stuck on Mr. Muntz's warehouse door in Great Charles Street, at nine o'clock in the morning, was notice enough to summon 12,000 or 20,000 persons to Newhall Hill at midday. When a youth, not fifteen, I had often been out at the meetings, and knew that there was a Reform Bill in the air.

The most famous of the oratorical visitors of the Political Union was Daniel O'Connell. In those days the voices of the great Irish leaders were always given to enlarge English freedom, as they have often been since. On one occasion a vast assembly beyond compute, met on Newhall Hill. Early in the morning a band of four hundred women had marched from Rowley Regis (locally called "Rowley Rags," which better described it), a place several miles from Birmingham, and had taken up a position in the hollow, near the platform. The tall form of O'Connell was conspicuous as he rose to speak. The moment his eye lighted on the unexpected mass of women in front of him, the quick instinct of the orator decided his first sentence, and he began, "Surrounded as I am by the fair, the gentle, and the good," which at once captivated his feminine hearers. Their occupation prevented them being very "fair," and holding a position amid 200,000 men—the number computed to be present—showed they were not very "gentle"; but they were "good," patriotic women, and they cheered the flattering allusion to themselves. The men behind cheered because the women cheered; and the crowd behind them, who

were too far away to hear well, cheered because those before them cheered, and thus the fortune of the great oration was made. What Sir Bulwer Lytton said of O'Connell's speaking was true at Newhall Hill :—

“ Once to my sight the giant thus was given,  
Walled by wide air and roofed by boundless heaven ;  
Methought no clarion could have sent its sound  
Even to the centre of the hosts around ;  
And as I thought, rose the sonorous swell  
As from some church tower swings the silver bell.  
Aloft and clear, from airy tide to tide  
It glided, easy as a bird may glide ;  
To the last verge of that vast audience.”

O'Connell had three manners : a didactic tone in the Courts—dignified argument in the House of Commons—raciness on the platform, where he abandoned himself to himself, on the Yankee principle, “ Fill yourself full of your subject as though you were a barrel, take out the bung, and let human nature caper.” In London we have seen O'Connell take off his necktie and open his collar to give himself more freedom. On one occasion, referring to the births in Dublin having decreased 5,000 a year for four years, he exclaimed, “ I charge the British Government with the murder of those 20,000 infants ” (who never were born). It was said with so much raciness that the audience did not perceive the delightful absurdity. Mr. Sam Timmins told me that an Irish schoolmaster who was present remarked to him, “ That's worthy of my country.” In one sense, O'Connell was right—British misrule had caused the depopulation of Dublin.

Another speaker who interested the residents more than any other platform visitor to Birmingham, was Charles Reece Pemberton. Though born in South Wales, he resided during his youth in Birmingham. His life was all vicissitude and romance. Of a sensitive, poetic, and dramatic temperament, he found an unsympathetic clerkship, to which he was confined, unendurable and ran away with a companion to Liverpool, where they were seized by a pressgang then prowling about. His friend, endeavouring to swim from the warship to which they were drafted, was drowned. Pemberton remained seven years in the service, and became acquainted with several

foreign stations. He had an irrepressible passion for acting and came to have theatres abroad. As a lecturer and expositor of Shakspeare he was unrivalled. He had a handsome, intellectual face, what the French would call *spirituelle* in expression, and his bright animation of manner, an intense hatred of injustice and sympathy with human progress made him the most popular lecturer who ever entered a Mechanics' Institution, to whose members he chiefly spoke. In a hundred towns none who ever heard him ceased to speak of him. His lectures on Shakspeare he illustrated by reciting passages; but his criticisms were not destined to introduce the passages—the passages were selected to illustrate the criticism. As he excelled in comedy as well as tragedy, every lecture afforded both instruction and delight. He wrote tragedies and songs, and some autobiographical chapters (sent to W. J. Fox when he edited the *Monthly Repository*) under the signature of "Pel Verjuice." The papers excited great interest, which led to Mr. Fox seeking his acquaintance. The first theatrical representation Pemberton ever saw was in the Birmingham Theatre, and his description of that first night is a memorable piece of writing. His pen was as vivid as his imagination. His account of a nomination meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall in 1835 tells the story of the beginning of electoral life in Birmingham. He wrote or spoke only of that which he had himself seen or felt. The impressions of the events and experience through which he had passed, he retained with what many thought a supernatural fidelity. He was playing one night at Hereford, having taken the theatre, as was his wont, to perform a series of "Shakspeare's tragic glories," as he styled them. Serjeant Talfourd, who was there during the Assize week, hearing that a new actor was in the town, went down to witness his performance, and was so struck by it that, finding but a small audience present, he paid the expenses of the house succeeding nights, that he might witness all the representations. In the *New Monthly* he afterwards described Pemberton as "a new actor of real tragic power," who might come to compare with Macready or Kean. By Talfourd's influence he appeared afterwards at Covent Garden Theatre. "Critics differed as to the merits of Pemberton's acting, and contradicted themselves more than they usually do, which

meant that there was new merit of some kind in the performances. Mediocrity never excites controversy," as Mr. Serjeant Talfourd said, writing upon this subject at the time. "The very difference of opinion means much. Mere mediocrity is not thus mistaken. It has no chameleon hues."

An affection of the throat, which timely cessation from lecturing might have rendered curable, killed him. By the generosity of Serjeant Talfourd, who bade him draw upon him for whatever he required, he went abroad, but without advantage, and returned to die at his brother's house in Ludgate Hill, Birmingham. I was the only stranger whom he wished admitted to his room in his last days. He felt keenly that when his powers were at their greatest, and when engagements, which would have made him opulent, awaited him, his strength was exhausted. His mind was filled with brilliant projects of service to the people. His last thoughts were expressed in lines which he wrote.

" Oh, could I do, of my vast will  
One millionth part—what joy would thrill  
My soul ! though lone and lorn,  
I die : ennobled by this shame,  
I'd court as worthiest, holiest fame,  
Contemporaneous scorn ! "

His friend John Fowler, of Sheffield, published a volume containing his life and works, and Ebenezer Elliott wrote one of his finest poems upon him, entitled, "Poor Charles." During his days of health he had given two performances in the Birmingham Theatre for the Building Fund of the Mechanics' Institution, and we erected a memorial over him in Key Hill Cemetery. I was secretary of the committee, and W. J. Fox wrote his epitaph.

Beneath this stone  
Rest the mortal remains of  
Charles Reece Pemberton,  
Who died March 3rd, 1840, aged 50.  
His gentle and fervid nature,  
His acute sensibility  
And his aspirations to the beautiful and true,  
Were developed and exercised  
Through a life of vicissitude,  
And often of privation and disappointment.

As a public lecturer  
 He has left a lasting memorial  
 In the minds of the many  
 Whom he guided to a perception  
 Of the genius of Shakspeare  
 In its diversified and harmonizing powers.  
 At oppression and hypocrisy  
 He spurned with a force proportioned  
 To that wherewith he clung  
 To justice and freedom, kindness, and sincerity.  
 Ever prompt for generous toil,  
 He won for himself from the world  
 Only the poet's dowry,  
 "The hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,  
 The love of love!"

This eloquent and comprehensive epitaph is his history. His health was failing when in a crowded room in Great Charles Street he read Fox's "Lecture on Class Moralities," which were then being delivered in South Place Chapel, London. No Sunday evening readings had been heard in Birmingham before. Since Pemberton's day I have heard hundreds of lecturers and preachers in England and America, but never one who had the animation, the inspiration, and the spontaneous variety he had. He came into the lecture-room like a flash of light, and the hearer saw new things ever after by it. He was of the people, and *for* the people, and owed all his powers to himself.

One of the men of mark, who, though not conspicuous on the platform of the Political Union, was William Pare—an organizing power on the side of insurgent opinion, and a member of the Town Council. Societies for the diffusion of Christian knowledge professedly took charge of the affairs of another world. Lord Brougham formed the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge—an entirely new sort of knowledge not recognized then, which had relation to the affairs of this world. He sent Mr. Coates to Birmingham to arrange the establishment of a mechanics' institution in the town. It was Mr. Pare mainly who carried out this intent. In all municipal enterprises and improvement Pare was foremost. He had an assuring voice, the genius of enthusiasm, which won others to unity, and made no enemies. He was appointed the first Registrar under the Act legalizing civil marriages, but as he was an advocate of Mr. Owen's views, the Bishop of Exeter brought his name

before the House of Lords, which led to Mr. Pare resigning that office. He was afterwards largely engaged as a railway statist in connection with the construction of railways, and subsequently as managing partner in The Irish Engineering Company of Seville Iron Works, Dublin, and resided at Clontarf. He was the Governor of Queenwood Community, established by Owen's disciples in Hampshire. He preserved his youthful animation to a good age, and his fidelity to the social and co-operative movement, and was the best representative of the philosophical principles of Robert Owen of all his disciples. His angerless voice never varied in the most conflicting counsel, and he was pacific without being passive. He was considerate to the erring, and at the same time energetic against error. He had two qualities which seldom go together—advocacy and organization. I was one of the first persons married in his office, intending to testify in favour of civil marriage, though the prosaicness of the arrangement provided by the Act inspired me with resentment. No bright chamber, hall, or temple, to give distinction to the ceremony ; only the business office of a Registrar of Deaths, infusing funeral associations into a wedding. Civil marriage had become a necessity ; but it was made as uninteresting as it could be, to drive persons back to church. It was the hope that Mr. Pare would officiate reconciled me to it, and imparted distinction to it in my mind. ✓

## CHAPTER X.

### *NATURE OF THE MIDLAND MIND.*

(1830-6.)

THE Midland mind is necessarily provincial. Provincial is not a good term, as the counties are not subjugated districts. I use the word provincial because there is none other which designates the compeers of the capital, the dwellers in the open land of plain and mountain. There is a common impression that the provincial mind is of a lower type than the metropolitan. This arises from overlooking that the London mind has brightness where the provincial mind has strength. Londoners are the lapidaries of the nation. They polish the diamond found in the counties, and sometimes, if no one challenges them, they take credit for producing the jewel. If any one could take out of the metropolitan mind all knowledge, thought, conjecture, imagination, and poetry, which it has secreted from provincial thinkers, many minds would be light as the shell when the egg is out. London abounds in egg-shell minds ; nevertheless, it has other minds of a noble order. The mark of metropolitanism is the mastery of many views. London is latitudinarian without which there is no tolerance.

One great advantage of provincial life is the opportunity of originality. There, originality can be seen by reason of its separateness. The provincial mind is the spring land of the nation. The metropolis is but the confluence of its many streams. Though the metropolis has the merit of attracting them, their origin is elsewhere. London is the mirror of the counties, where every provincial man of genius who looks into it, sees his own face. Still the provincial mind has the dis-

advantage of a fixed eye. It sees clearly what is before it, and nothing escapes it within its own range, but it sees little beyond and nothing around it. It does not ignore excellence in others : it does not know of it. Ignoring implies knowing and intentional disregard. The tendency of the provincial mind is not only not to know, its tendency is not to believe in anything but itself. Its secret opinion is that nature exhausted herself in bestowing upon the provincial mind the ideas it has, and that other persons, who profess to know something, are unconscious impostors, being unaware that all true conceptions were otherwise distributed before they applied for them. If this be not so, the provincial mind often gives this impression of itself. Any observer of local politics frequently sees a citizen arise who supposes himself to know everything from the beginning and previously. One day he finds himself a member of the Town Council, and confronted by forty or fifty gentlemen each under precisely the same impression of his own attainments. Then the all-knowing citizen is dismayed at the skill required and the delay which intervenes before he obtains ascendancy for his views there. If it come to pass that the same aspirant enters Parliament, he finds himself face to face with six hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen, each privately convinced that he alone has the right idea of the government of the world. Then he is amazed at the art, tact, eloquence, patience, and resource necessary to overcome the representative and concentrated obstinacy which he encounters in that assembly. I have watched a hundred men in the House of Commons of just and strong ambition, grow pale with dying purpose as they stepped into that wilderness of infallibility, when the fierce blasts of contrariety of opinion first beat upon them. They were discouraged when they discovered how slowly the mill of the gods grind—when they have to turn the wheels. Many leaders who have awakened the courage and hope of the provinces have been the first to feel discouraged in Parliament, and what was worse to propagate discouragement. The one advantage of the Parliamentary mind is that it has, like a lighthouse, a revolving eye. It sees all the country around. Hence Parliament awaits events with an unamazed expectancy. It is never disconcerted and never despairs. It knows that common consent to the right is a pursuit of infinite labour and infinite worth, and that

✓ victory comes with facts, time, and persistence. Its art is impartiality, its strategy is patience, its grace is deference, and its strength toleration. It is wise not by its own wisdom, but by wisdom acquired in winning honest concurrence.

✓ It was not till I began to notice these varying characteristics of local and metropolitan life that it was possible to understand what persistence of effort is necessary in propagandism, or to encounter without surprise the natural obstacles in the way of a new conviction, and the resentments which are awakened by the attempt to create it.



## CHAPTER XI.

### *WIDER VIEWS.*

(1837.)

REVERENCE for excellence I always had. It was not called forth or cultivated—it came to me like a sense. No book of etiquette was needed to teach me how to act towards those whom I had reason to regard. I used to walk home with my tutor to the other end of the town on dark nights, though less able than he to defend myself, if attacked on my return alone.

Mr. Daniel Wright had been the tutor of C. R. Pemberton, already mentioned, and a greater Shakspearian critic than any other actor before his time. Pemberton said to me "he owed more to Daniel Wright than to any man, save his own father." I might, in my turn, say the same of Mr. Wright, who gave me advice as to the conduct of life, and Mr. Hawkes Smith, to whom Mr. Wright commended me, did also—advice which was only in the minds of Unitarian thinkers, and of which no other religious body in Birmingham had knowledge or took interest. Mr. Wright was at one time partner with Thomas Clutton Salt, a colleague of Thomas Attwood, with whom he was associated in founding the famous Birmingham Political Union, which contributed so much to the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832. The place of business of Salt and Wright was at the corner of Paradise Street, on the spot on which the Town Hall now stands. Mr. Wright was a man immovable in a cause he believed to be just. He had a lawsuit with his partner. He won his cause but lost his capital. When the Mechanics' Institution was formed, he was appointed tutor. Mr. Wright,

more cultivated than his partner, had the manners of a gentle man, and his wide knowledge was of a kind always ready for use. He was about fifty when I became one of his pupils. He was of middle stature, strongly built, his face was pallid ; you could scarcely see that it was pock-marked. His manner was grave and silent, showing the sense of misfortune and fortitude. All who spoke of him in the town did it with sympathy and respect.

In 1839, an exhibition of machinery and art manufactures was held in the Shakspeare Rooms, New Street. It was said that Prince Albert had in view to promote an International Exhibition (which was held eleven years later) should this experiment excite distinctive public interest. Some machines of remarkable delicacy of action were supplied by Lieutenant Lecount. Application was made to Mr. Wright to recommend some student at the Mechanics' Institution, who, with assistants he might select, would explain the various objects to visitors. Mr. Wright recommended me, and I undertook the duty. One day Sir Robert Peel came, Prince Albert and other persons of distinction visited the exhibition, Lieut. Lecount came down daily. He was a short man and wore a rough sea jacket. He had served in the navy under Constantine Moorson, and spoke with pride of a battle in which he had been engaged with him. He was liable to fainting fits, and when they were coming on he would crouch down among the machinery against the wall, telling me not to regard him, and when he recovered he rose and continued his survey. He was spoken of as "the mathematician of the London and Birmingham Railway," as he was engaged in its construction. At that time the Rev. Timothy East, a saintly and popular preacher, to whose gentle tones and fierce expressions I was oft a listener—who ranked next to the Rev. J. Angell James in his reputation in the town, was accustomed to call at the railway office. As well as "mansions in the skies," Mr. East had shares in the railway, which Lecount thought incompatible with his spiritual pretensions. Not knowing the lieutenant, and seeing him in his rough attire, Mr. East took him to be a porter, and called out, "Hold my horse." Lecount replied with a naval oath of rotund quality and explosive as a shell—being provoked by the superciliousness in the preacher's tone, which offended Lecount's self-respect. Mr. East com-

plained of the singular behaviour of "the man at the door," when he was told that he had addressed Lieutenant Lecount, who was a French gentleman of official distinction and of great attainments. Mr. East excused himself for his mistake, and regretted that his many acquirements did not include a little civility among them. Lecount, under the name of Dr. P. Y., wrote a book of note at the time, which was published by my friend, Henry Hetherington, entitled "A Hunt After the Devil." There was little of that person in the book, which was filled with mathematical calculations, remarkably identical with those which Bishop Colenso afterwards made, of the dimensions of the ark and of its inadequacy to contain a ten thousandth part of the inmates which we are informed entered it.

One morning, which I shall never forget, my tutor came down in his friendly way to see how I was getting on in my new employment. He shook hands at the entrance with Captain Van Burl, who was treasurer of the exhibition, and died as he was doing so. We laid him in one of the rooms, and it was hours after before I could persuade myself that he was dead. Through his influence I had made many friends, whose wider views in religion enlarged my own. As the Mechanics' Institution could not at once replace Mr. Wright, the committee appointed me to conduct the classes for a time. Some of the students in whom Mr. Wright had taken interest became afterwards distinguished—among them was Dr. J. A. Langford.

Mr. Wright was buried in the Old Meeting House Yard, where his pupils and friends placed a tablet over his grave. Dr. Langford published in his "Century of Birmingham Life" a graceful and grateful tribute which he wrote in his memory. Two of the stanzas celebrate Mr. Wright's charm of manner, whether his subject was Shakspeare, Euclid, or Truth.

"As thou the poet's glorious strain,  
Or Euclid's problems didst explain.

Thy eyes with loving-kindness bright,  
More brightly beam, as beamed the light,  
Of truth in minds so dear to thee  
As all thy pupils were."

Through my friend Mr. Hawkes Smith I was invited to teach a class in the Unitarian Sunday School at the new Meeting

House, locally known as Dr. Priestley's Chapel, of which the Rev. Mr. Kentish was then the chief preacher. The Sunday School had classes for the study of logic and mathematics—the Unitarians alone gave such instruction on the Sunday. But I retained all the time my Trinitarian belief with which they never interfered. The Rev. William Crompton, whose sister Mr. George Dawson subsequently married, once asked me if I remained Trinitarian in belief. I answered that I did. A vague impression existed in my mind that three Gods were not too many to attend to the affairs of this vast universe.<sup>1</sup> Contemporaneous in the town was a Rev. Dr. Brindley, a school-master who was to the Church party what Busfield Ferrand was to the Tory party, who used to attack Cobden and Bright in the Anti-Corn Law agitation; and Brindley was like Ferrand in personal appearance, in coarseness, fury of speech, and lust for notoriety. He first came forward, and delivered a course of lectures in reply to George Combe, whose phrenological views he represented as being highly hostile to Christianity. The idea of intelligence being manifested under material conditions, and subject to material laws, had not then entered into the theological mind. Mr. Hawkes Smith delivered a course of lectures in vindication of Combe, when Brindley's incapacity was made patent to the town. With the adroitness of a robust controversialist, he retaliated by attacking Mr. Hawkes Smith for his Socialistic views, where the sympathy of religious prejudice in favour of his new assault would conceal his intellectual deficiencies. Mr. Hawkes Smith was known for his intrepid defence of Robert Owen's social views, which sought the improvement of human condition by human means. Mr. Wright had taught his pupils that all opinion should be tested by reason, so we were uninfluenced by Dr. Brindley, and as he defamed Mr. Hawkes Smith, whom we all had reason to regard, many of us began to inquire into the validity of Mr. Owen's

<sup>1</sup> The three typical men in Birmingham, at that time, were G. F. Muntz, before named; Mr. John Cadbury, the founder of the cocoa making firm—a white-headed, nimble, well-built Quaker, who wore drab breeches and white silk stockings, which well displayed a fine pair of calves which were the admiration of the streets, of which the owner seemed conscious; and Mr. Crompton, a sheet copper merchant, father of the minister (Rev. W. Crompton) whom I have named. He was a bright, handsome man of refined expression, with delicate colour in his cheeks, the most gentlemanly man who came to business in Broad Street. I met him twice a day for thirteen years.

views, tested by the light of reason and experience. It appeared to me that the practical outcome of these Socialist views was to supersede the coercion of wrongdoers by removing the causes which led to mischievous action, and extinguish the ignorance which led to erroneous opinion. A memorable passage of Coleridge, the greatest thinker among theologians of his day, which described the quality of mind in this class of Socialists, made a strong impression upon me. It was this—

“Accustomed to regard all the affairs of men as a process, they never hurry, and they never pause. Theirs is not a twilight of political knowledge which gives just light enough to place one foot before the other : as they advance the scene still opens upon them. Convinced that vice originates not in the man, but in the surrounding circumstances—not in the heart, but in the understanding—they are hopeless concerning no one. By endeavouring to alter the circumstances they would remove, or by strengthening the intellect disarm temptation.”

Afterwards I was induced to hear Robert Owen, who came to address his partizans in Allison Street Rooms. Eventually I took part in discussions there. Sometimes I selected the Evening Lessons and read them. As I selected from various authors passages I cared for, and read them as though I cared for the sentiments, it caused me to be frequently requested to officiate in that way, and ultimately to give some short lectures. In 1837, I went one night with Mr. Hollick to deliver an address in Kidderminster, and slept at an inn where, the bed being over the brewery, the steam came through the floor, and I remember being very damp in the morning, but not being chilled I took no harm.

Never doubting that other persons had a right to differ from me, it never entered my mind to resent it, but in the Brindley controversy I found theological persons did resent difference from them. While Mr. Hawkes Smith was delivering his lectures in defence of phrenology and the influence of circumstance on character, Mr. Brindley twisted on his seat, made faces as though he wished to divert attention from the arguments of the speaker, and otherwise treated difference of opinion as a defect of morality, without incurring the disapprobation of his Christian supporters, which made me less proud than I had been to be counted on their side. For myself I could

hardly be said to differ from anybody, but looked at things in my own way, and as I conceived no one to be under obligation to take my view, I felt myself under no obligation to take theirs. When, however, the conflicts mentioned subsided, it did seem an obligation to improve the material condition of others, if it could be done. This impression was confirmed in various ways, and under the influence of incidents which I may elsewhere recount. Thus, in addition to the persuasion I had of the usefulness of piety, was added the conviction of the piety of usefulness.

Mr. Brindley had industry and tact, and was right in some of his objections to Socialism. Had he been actuated by the desire of directing those of that opinion wisely, and of making such intention felt, he might have rendered service to them and the public.

## CHAPTER XII.

### *BYWAY TRAGEDIES.*

(1837.)

#### I.

SOMETIMES a man may engage in actual tragedies, under a political despotism for instance, there being apparently to him no other extrication from an unendurable state of things. He foresees then what may come to him in consequence. In so far as he acts from a clear sense of duty he casts his lot with uncertain Fortune, and does not repine when it goes against him. To foresee, in the language of Byron, that

“The block may soak your gore,  
Your head may sodden in the sun ; your limbs  
Be strung to city gates and castle walls,”

is not a fine outlook, nor a pleasant future to contemplate. It is all very grand in the blank verse of Marino Faliero, but that mode of figuring on “castle walls” is quite a different thing ; especially if some critical historian comes after you and gives it as his opinion that you did it all “for notoriety.”

Sometimes a man may step into what is of the nature of a tragedy and not know it ; or an event may come to him with death in its coils, but which does not pass for tragedy because death plays only a silent part in it. These affairs occur in daily life more frequently than is thought, and it appears to me that there is no station in society in which education in heroism or fortitude in youth may not be serviceable in after life.

One day when I was eighteen, a young Lichfield girl came into my workshop to speak to a relative—a relative by kindness

rather than by blood, as she was kinless. She had a gipsy kind of beauty, but with an instinctive shyness not common with that tribe. As I looked up at her, the sunlight was pouring into the place. As she stood between two windows, she seemed transparent. The crimson rays seemed to pass through her hands and face. Carbon dust was flying about, and most objects were grim around, which perhaps rendered more noticeable the ruddiness and freshness of the girl. I had never seen anything like it. Little did I think that sight would never go out of my mind. For two years I sought her company as a lover. Always diffident myself, unless some sense of duty dissipated the feeling, I was a very unengaging though not unpersistent suitor. No art or entreaty of mine ever won her voluntary society for a single stroll. Partly from hopelessness of success and partly from having been taught enough at the Mechanics' Institution to make me aware how little I knew, I determined to give myself to learning what I could for some time. That my desistance from my suit might relieve the Zingara from the inconvenience of my assiduities, I wrote to her and explained the resolution I had taken. Unhappy hour when I sent that letter. I see every article in the room in which I stood when I wrote it. No answer resulted, but two Sundays later—the sun was again shining in the street—she came to the door of the house where I was and asked for me, and, when I went there, she, scarcely glancing at me, held out the open letter, let it drop from her hand, and leaving it went away. She could not in words ask me to take it back—but in this mute and maidenly way she did it—and I knew it, yet feared and deferred to act upon the unforeseen signs. Impelled by the fascination of a new misery which so often carries us along when we cannot avert it, or fathom the future, I went out and walked in silence by her side to the gate of the cottage where she resided. I never saw her again until she was dying. Ambition, albeit not an unworthy one, had hardened my mind, but not so as to make me insensible to the happiness of another. The desire to know had not cast all other sentiments out of my heart, and I was sorry I had formed my purpose. Had I known what pain came to her by my act, I would not have done it. Had I known the consequence, I would not have done it. My motive and conduct were without the range of her knowledge,

and no doubt appeared as an excuse merely for concealing a changed interest in her. Yet so far as I had known she had none in me, and probably she did not know it either—until my parting letter reached her. Had I any knowledge of the incertitude of a girl's heart, oft unknown to herself, I might have won her consent to delay. But I had no experience, no skill. Intellectual ignorance had become insupportable to me, yet I had in my own mind only to make a sacrifice of pleasure for my own improvement—not sacrifice another. No distinction to be won atones for that. Had I been capable of reasoning upon my duty, I should have seen that, since I had sought the girl's love, I was bound to regard it when I discovered that I had succeeded. A small china, acorn-shaped jewel, which belonged to her mother (to whom it was a fatal gift of love), was given me after her death. I do not lose it. I do not look at it. Busy streets now cover the site of sandhills and trees where I had first seen her walk. Not far away still stands the fence of the cottage garden where we last parted. But never more do I walk there. After years of absence, my road may pass through the place. But no lapse of time, nor day nor night, make any difference. As soon as I am there, houses and streets and friends with me disappear as though they were not, and the trees, sandbanks, the bright broad roadway, and sunshine come back. The old cottage stands there again just as I saw it fifty years ago, and the silent, tremulous, tearful little beauty is turning to go in. Happy years of love have since succeeded. Remorse has never mingled therewith, because there was no intention of wrong in my mind. But the past is still a pain. At times I dream that I go out to meet the winsome figure coming down a glade. The crimson sunlight is again upon her. Darkness comes—a river is running at my feet, and I cannot pass over it. I turn to seek means of crossing it—and awake. We never meet. Another time I dream that my long self-set task of study is accomplished. My heart is joyous, I walk until I come in sight of a familiar cottage amid trees. I pass the fence. I open the door. The fire is burning—the kettle is singing—flowers are in the window. I enter—the chairs are all empty, the little round table has nothing on it. She is in the next room. I watch and wait for the opening of the door. I listen—there is no one stirring nor rustle over-

head. There is no voice. There is nobody there. I understand it all—and awake, glad that my imagination is touched with sympathy and not with guilt.

## II.

There are a class of tragedies which come to you and spread their shadows about you in which you have no natural lot or part.

A pretty young girl was on a visit at my house, I having often been the guest of her parents. A colleague of mine, oft calling upon me, came thus to see her and conceived affection for her. Soon after her return home, St. Valentine's Day came, when she received one of that saint's missives—in this case an offensive little picture such as silly persons oft delight to send at that time to annoy or mystify young lovers. As it came from London, and no one there whom the young girl knew of was likely to send her a valentine of any kind save my friend, she unhappily concluded that it came from him. They were but slightly acquainted, and, after the way of country girls, she probably had misgivings as to whether her town admirer might not look down upon her. She imagined the valentine was meant to deride her, and that she had been played with, and imposed upon by insincere professions of regard. By another post there came openly and avowedly a true valentine, which would have charmed her exceedingly had she been able to believe in it. Thinking it also had come from her double-minded suitor, she returned it. While the propriety of doing so was being discussed by her sisters, none having discernment to doubt whether both could have come from one who had never been open to a suspicion of insincerity—one of the sisters in her excitement upset the ink pot over the true valentine, and as it had been determined to return it, it was returned in that state. Being received by her lover again with this mark of indignity or neglect upon it, he in his turn imagined he was indeed rejected. Before this arrived, he had written to the young lady's father the kind of letter which a gentleman unknown to him would write, giving him references, and asking his permission to pay his addresses to his daughter, in whom he had become interested during her visit to London. No answer

ever came, which confirmed him in his impression that the returned valentine implied his dismissal. Thus correspondence ceased on both sides. A month later the letter to the father came back to the lover. By a fatal mischance, such as often waits on lovers, he had directed the letter to the wrong town (to Manchester instead of to Sheffield), having no familiarity with the parts where she lived, and it lay undelivered in the Dead Letter Office until the Post Office returned it to the writer. What happiness that letter would have brought to the household for which it was intended had it been delivered ! The returned valentine made him hesitate what to do, and he did nothing.

Here was as pretty a dramatic combination of misadventures in love as any one need wish to meet with ; and if all ended here it was an affair to laugh over. But, alas, there was death in it. Before the day of unravelment came, opportunity occurred to my friend, the mystified lover, to renew his acquaintance with another whose affection he had once unsuccessfully sought. Some time after it came to pass that I was again a guest in the house where lived my former visitor who received the double valentines. I found the pretty flower of the household drooping. The old brightness was dimmed, the old gaiety had departed. It had then become known to them that the mischief-making valentine had been the act of a silly phrenologist, who had been a guest in the house, and who had sent it to London to be posted there in order to perplex the recipient. That act killed the girl. We wished that all the bumps of that idiotic phrenologist had been reduced to powder, and scattered to the winds, before that trick got into his spurious brains. A new embroglio followed in an unsuspected way. To vindicate the sincerity of my London friend, and to show that when my host's daughter was entrusted to my care she had not become acquainted with one who was not a man of honour—I related to what effect he had written to her father, and how his letter came back through misdirection. This knowledge unhappily made the disappointment sharper and more real. In the end I was asked to decide what should be done. Had I possessed common sense, I should have made reply, saying, "It was altogether an affair for the elders in Israel, and not for a young man unskilled in affairs of this kind, where only experience

could see its way." It is clearly a fault to be ready to take other people's troubles upon you and relieve them from the necessity of thinking for themselves. As the unhappy acquaintanceship commenced when my host's daughter was my guest, it appeared to me that I ought to do something to amend matters, if that were possible. When I related to my friend in London the facts, he very honourably said that, although his thoughts were turned elsewhere, he would marry my visitor if I said he ought. I conferred with her mother. Had I been called upon to solve a problem in Euclid, I could have done it : but I had never had time to study the casuistry of love, and had small skill therein. It seemed to me that to offer the young thing a second-hand heart, which had been twice enthralled by another, might prove hereafter an ill gift. A hand tendered as it were by command and not spontaneously and gladly offered, did that mean happiness in the future ? Could a mother advise her child to venture upon that ? The child most concerned would say nothing. Love is diffident and also proud, and will not ask what it is ready to offer its life for if presented to it. This I did not sufficiently understand. So it was agreed that the poor lost thing had better forget her London love. Whether she could forget it was quite another thing. If such a duty befell me again, I should put very different questions from those I put then. Then I did not know that an honourable man can find happiness in a marriage of duty, where he is sure of abounding love for himself. My decision brought a new cloud over my path. Long after I saw that I should not have accepted any responsibility in the matter ; that what I ought to have done was simply to say to my friend, "Go and see the girl yourself. The decision lies between yourselves." In an interview love and honour would find a wiser issue than any philosophy or prudence could devise. During the thirty years in which I have oft again been a visitor at the house of the parents of the girl, the shadow of that death meets me at the fireside. Over the mantelpiece hangs the pretty face which the grave has so long held. The mother, whose force of character amounted to distinction, speaks a few words in accents which no other sorrow ever extorts from her. The mischievous knave who sent the fatal valentine what must he think, if he has a nature to be pierced

by remorse? My friend whose ill-fate it was to come in the poor child's path, when he has walked the deck of a Cape sea-ship at night, must oft have seen in the shrouds a sweet, slender figure, with a sad, pale face, glide away as he looked up: and doubtless he has many a time wandered in his dreams to a strange Hallamshire grave where the young light of life was extinguished in a hapless and hopeless love.

Among her papers sent to me after her death are the following verses. I possess them still. They are in her own handwriting. They are probably a copy of lines which expressed only too well her own feelings and fate. They were the last words she wrote :—

“I've pressed my last kiss on thy brow,  
I've breathed my last farewell,  
And hushed within my breaking heart  
The love I may not tell.

I sought to win thee for mine own,  
To wear thee in my heart,  
That dream is o'er—I leave thee now,  
And bless thee as we part.

Thy low sweet tones are in my ear,  
Where'er my footsteps roam,  
And pleasant memories of the past  
Will make my heart their home.

And when my bark, now passion-tossed  
Upon life's wintry sea,  
Shall sink beneath the stormy wave,  
Wilt thou not weep for me?

Farewell! I may not pause to gaze  
Into those eyes of thine—  
Heaven spare thy heart the agony  
That now is rending mine.”

Afterwards nothing happened to soften the memory of the silent tragedy which found its way to my hearth. In this world where real sorrow is pretty copious and any one with susceptibility meets with more than enough, few tragedies are worth the telling. Neither on the stage nor in books is it often excusable to produce them. Were it not that in the two instances given here the reader may learn some wisdom how to act in like cases—wisdom hidden from the actors in them, and

which, had it been possessed by them, might have prevented the tragedies happening—I would not relate them.

In 1850 commenced the *People's Review*, of which the illustrated cover, printed in colours, was designed and its vignettes executed by W. J. Linton, whose skilful and generous pencil was always at the service of his friends. So far as I remember it was the first sixpenny review issued. It was edited by "Friends of Order and Progress," and he of whom I have spoken in the preceding narrative was one of the "Friends" who joined me in conducting it. He afterwards became a recognized journalist, and an authority in military literature of which he had then no knowledge, which was entirely out of his experience, and for which we did not suppose he had any taste, which speaks all the more for his versatility, capacity, and powers of application.

### III.

Other experiences, tragical though unobtrusive, occur in a varying career, without personal instruction in them, save so far as their relation prevents others feeling surprise whom they may befall.

It will come to pass that what you most desire and have long looked for, you never see. All the while it lies near you—by your side. But a gossamer veil, a mere spider web, woven by the imagination, so thin that you might blow it away if you thought to do it—yet just enough to hide from you what your eyes covet to behold, and you know it not. You may be concerned in catastrophes which, like storms that dash down sea walls, or like winds which rend forest trees, spreading desolation around you, and yet they never disturb that fragile, all-concealing veil. Oftener than the unreflecting or unsensitive imagine this form of fate happens. Duty itself often subjects men to this silent destiny, which requires as much heroism to confront as open war, and more courage to endure than hostile defeat. I have seen those who, on comprehending what had occurred to them, were never the same afterwards. Pursuits of business, or pursuits of the mind, effaced the sense of the loss for a time, but at the first disengaged interval it recurred. It was as though a supernatural visitant stood always at the door of the mind, and the moment it was, as it were, on the latch, it was opened,

and the visitant came in. When occupation again begins, it seems to go out again. You bar the door, but you know it is still standing there. In daily life, there are cries, though no sound is heard by others ; there are tragedies, though no one is observed to be killed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *FOURTEEN NIGHTS WITH GEORGE COMBE.*

(1838.)

FIFTY years ago morality seemed stagnant. There were ripples of controversy on technical points in theology, and no one threw any new light over the monotonous plain of orthodox thought, when a work was announced entitled "The Constitution of Man," by George Combe. It was welcomed among students as the new Gospel of Practical Ethics. The title was one of promise, the style was clear, the thought innovatory; it used accepted terms of theology, and endowed them with modern significance. It based morality on natural law, and the mind of no theologian remained the same after reading it. I felt as much interest in seeing the author of "The Constitution of Man" as I should in seeing the writer of the "Arabian Nights." One evening in May, 1838, Mr. William Hawkes Smith, already mentioned, the chief advocate of social thought in Birmingham, put into my hands the prospectus of a course of "Fourteen Lectures on Phrenology, to be delivered by George Combe, of Edinburgh, in the theatre of the Philosophical Institution." I was told Mr. Combe wanted an assistant. Mr. Hawkes Smith having made fruitless applications, applied to my class-mate, Frederick Hollick, who had the brightest mind of any student in the Mechanics' Institution. He, with a frugal insight of the ways of the world—supernatural compared with mine—said, "Very well; but on what terms? Fourteen nights abstracted from my studies will be a manifest loss." Mr. Smith, who had no instruction as to "terms," shook his head, and said, "Well, I must try Holyoake."

To me he came. To speak of money in relation to the

author of "The Constitution of Man" seemed to me a desecration, and I at once assented to be at his command. Hollick had learned that no enthusiasm, however intense, could live upon nothing. He was, in that respect, of the opinion of Falstaff. "There lies glory, but here stand I," and had no taste for growing thin on praise. I had watched the asteroids from the roof of the Eagle Foundry during cold nights of November, from six in the evening to eight o'clock in the morning—from Sunday to Wednesday, and no cessation of my daily work was provided for. This I had done for the Philosophical Institution, and thought myself rich in their vote of thanks (being philosophers, it did not occur to them that anything else was necessary); while, out of my small earnings, I paid for medicine for myself and a coadjutor whom I had seduced into these profitless, perilous, nocturnal, cold-giving, but delightful watchings. We all had several colds. Hollick was one of the watchers, but he never more became my meteorological comrade. My not hinting at payment was an advantage in Mr. Combe's eyes, being one of those whom "in England, Ireland, Scotland, North America, and Germany" he sought, as afterwards appeared.

On May 31, 1838, Mr. Hawkes Smith introduced me to Mr. Combe, saying friendly words as to what he believed to be my intelligence and fitness; whereupon I said, "These kindly assurances are not necessary in Mr. Combe's case, as he, by a more certain process, can judge himself of my suitability." Upon this I took off my hat (we were standing in the doorway of the ante-room), Mr. Combe, smiling, passed his hand over my head, and said he was "sure that I should suit him well." This being settled scientifically, I appeared for fourteen nights in the lecture-room as Mr. Combe's assistant. I was given to understand that the lectures would occupy, as in Edinburgh, but one hour; but it happened that, including attendance before and after the lectures, I was occupied nearly four hours each night. In addition, I attended a short course of morning manipulations. On the 5th of June he presented me with his "Elements of Phrenology" (the 3s. 6d. edition, with an autograph inscription), which I still possess. He said it would better enable me to assist him. At the conclusion he presented me with an old bust, by De Ville, with the nose broken off,

which would not go into his box, but which I valued, as coming from him, more than any other bust with the nose on, and that would go into a box.

On the morning of his final departure from Birmingham for America, I went down to the Philosophical Institution to bid him farewell, and there witnessed, for the first time, one man kiss another. Bally, who was formerly with Spurzheim, had come to Birmingham with Combe. He seemed much attached to Mr. Combe, and always professed the highest regard for him. They stood together in the passage of the institution, when Bally, to my astonishment, and apparently to Mr. Combe's, threw his arms round him as though he was going to carry him into the cab, but instead of which he pressed his Swiss lips to Combe's orange cheeks, and perpetrated a series of kisses. I, who was unacquainted with the continental custom of men kissing each other, was confused and amazed.

Several of my personal friends had attended Mr. Combe's lectures, and subscribed to the piece of plate presented to him at the conclusion of the course. Some of them said, by way of curiosity, "What did he give you for your services, Holy-oake?" I answered, "Nothing ; I did not expect anything !" "That's strange," they said. The Mechanics' Institution had, during four weeks, given up their usual lecture nights for Mr. Combe's convenience, which induced them to think they had some claim upon him for a lecture for the benefit of their building fund. Mr. Combe declined to accede thereto. Mr. John Lowther Murphy, a member of the committee, proposed to write to the *Birmingham Journal* upon the subject, and asked me to do so too. To this I objected, saying, "No man was to be censured for not being generous." As Mr. Combe had carried away an excellent purse from Birmingham, Mr. Hawkes Smith was induced by others to write to Mr. Combe respecting me. Subsequently he told me that Mr. Combe had written from Bristol to say "I had no claim upon him, and, moreover, that I had imperfectly held up the casts in the lecture-room." That he should assume I had no claim upon him I was content, but to say I had assisted him badly I thought mean ; and, besides, it was not true ; for at parting he distinctly assured me that I "had suited him well." I consulted my tutor, Mr.

Wright, who said, "Send a letter to Mr. Combe, and put yourself right with him." In the meantime, Mr. Combe had gone to America. Mr. Vallance, a young merchant who was cognizant of the whole transaction, volunteered to take my letter to Mr. Combe, and, finding him at Boston, stepped up to him one night after a lecture, saying he "was the bearer of a letter from Mr. Holyoake, of Birmingham, who would be glad of a reply from him."

The letter stated in respectful terms that "his complaint of the nature of my service came very late, as, had he made intimation of it earlier in the fourteen nights during which I had served him, he would not have seen any more of me. As his disparagement was not consistent with what he had said to me on leaving, I was anxious to assure him that I had never applied for remuneration, directly or indirectly, or complained to any one of not having received any. It was some of his own friends who thought I had a right to some payment." It was eight years before I received any reply to my letter.

All that time I carried a copy of the letter about with me, intending to re-deliver it myself if I should fall in with Mr. Combe. It was Wednesday, January 7, 1846, before this happened. Being then in Glasgow, I found that Dr. Andrew Combe was to deliver the inaugural address of the Chair of Phrenology which he had founded in the Andersonian University. As Dr. Combe was in declining health, the probability was that his brother would officiate in his place; and so it proved. The theatre of the Andersonian University is, as much as need be, like an oven in appearance, and when filled it has the other quality of being an oven in fact. Nevertheless, I was in that oven on that day. In those days, most young men who read outside the Bible had some passage of Byron in their minds. One that had impressed me began—

"If we do but watch the hour  
There never yet was human power"—

that could evade those who had persistence enough to wait and watch. At the precise moment announced, my identical long-sought friend George Combe walked on to the platform. At the conclusion of his address I went down to him and said, "Mr. Combe, you will remember me as Mr. Holyoake, who

assisted you during your lectures in Birmingham. I have a letter to give you, which I have waited eight years for an opportunity of putting into your hands. You will oblige me by an answer." He knew my voice again ; he took my letter with the air of a man who had an inconvenient recollection awakened. He did reply on the 13th, in which he said that "in the whole course of his experience in lecturing in England, Ireland, Scotland, North America, and Germany, I was the only assistant who ever hinted that he expected any pecuniary remuneration." As I never had "hinted" this, and the letter before him expressly said so, Mr. Combe was plainly in error. He had probably overlooked my disclaimer. He added, "No one who does not interest himself in the work so as to consider it an advantage to himself to execute it, makes a desirable assistant to a lecturer on phrenology." But where the assisted gains and the assister loses, participation in equity were not unseemly. There must, therefore, be an organ in "desirable" young men which Mr. Combe had not put in his craniological map, namely, the organ of assist-for-nothingness. Mr. Combe further said that "the events of my connection with him he could not recall at that distance of time, and if he unsaid anything he had said, it would be contradicting himself without any consciousness of being in error ; but he assured me sincerely nothing remained in his recollection the least injurious to me as having occurred at the lectures." There ended the matter, as that assurance was satisfactory. In acknowledging his letter, I expressed my appreciation of his efforts on behalf of phrenological philosophy, which threw a new light on human character, in which every man was interested, and by which every man was advantaged. An extract from a diary which I kept in those days shows what took place between me and Mr. Combe at the time of his lectures in Birmingham.

"Attended on Mr. Combe. After his lecture I showed him the book of Euclid which I had written out, with the diagrams which I had made with sheet iron compasses of my own construction, and also some propositions of my own which I deduced and demonstrated from Euclid. He said 'they were highly creditable to me and neatly done, and that to comprehend all the parts of a complicated proposition I must have a strong organ of form. Those,' he said, 'who were deficient in

form could take in only a part of a diagram at a time, and while doing that forgot the other.' 'Size,' he said, 'enabled me to determine what space to allot to a diagram, and to adopt that size of letter in writing which made it possible for me to say what I had to say in the space available.' This has always been easy to me. 'Individuality,' he said, 'gave the power to recollect the parts and references in propositions. He added that 'I had causality considerable,' and explained to me 'what organs were necessary in mathematics, geometry, and arithmetic.' On another evening, when attending him in the ante-room before the lecture, as he selected the different busts he wanted me to produce to the audience, he explained to me why phrenologists declined to discuss with opponents. 'If,' said he, 'a man were to ask, Have you a nose on your face? what should you say? Why, look. So it is with phrenology—it is founded on facts. We say to opponents, Look to these facts. I never ask any one to believe phrenology. I tell what it is, and people may do as they please about believing it. Discussion can establish no fact; observation must do this.'"

I always counted these conversations as an advantage to me.

At that time, phrenology being new, it was a subject of much interest to myself, Dr. Hollick, and other fellow-students, and we procured the heads of animals in order to acquire definite ideas of craniology. Wishing to verify what I could, I had asked Mr. Combe questions concerning myself. He said "I was of the Nervous Lymphatic Temperament" (it would have been better for my peace had I been more lymphatic), and that I "had the organs of Locality large." Up to that time I found my way about very well by observation, but afterwards, trusting to Mr. Combe's assurance that I had Locality, I ordinarily took the wrong road.

My estimate of Mr. Combe has never changed—that he was the greatest expositor of phrenology who has arisen. He did for it what Dr. Paley did for theology by his design argument; but Combe, no more than Paley, invented his argument, and both would have stood higher in the estimation of their readers had they owned what they owed to their predecessors. Many adversaries never gave Combe credit for the merits he had, because he concealed his obligations to the more original minds of Spurzheim and Gall.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *IN SEARCH OF MONSIEUR BALLY.*

(1838.)

MONSIEUR BALLY, who had been cast maker to Spurzheim, whom I last mentioned as kissing Mr. Combe, became friendly to me after the great phrenologist had left the town. The human face, like a principle, is fair or dubious on a first inspection. In Monsieur Bally's there was a certain mixture of the bland and the equivocal. I became acquainted with him as men do with a razor, gradually and cautiously, and in the end the usual accident with razors befell me—I was cut by him.

Job did not see his famous apparition more indelibly than I still see Monsieur Bally, as he first walked up the right-hand side of the laboratory in Cannon Street. I could tell the texture of his hair, and the length of his eyebrows—where his coat wanted “nap,” and where it wanted brushing ; for daily contact with plaster used to leave white marks visible, and M. Bally, devoted to his profession, seemed unconscious of what ought to follow, viz., the brushing.

No sooner was Mr. Combe gone, than I was given to understand by my new friend, Bally, that he intended a longer stay, and proposed doing a little business in making busts and casts, could he and the person in want of such things be brought together. To this end I was to promote a knowledge of his wishes and abilities among all likely persons to whom, directly or indirectly, I had access. My kind friend, Dr. Ick, curator of the Philosophical Institution, to whom belonged the distinction of being the philosopher among the philosophicals, assisted me with addresses. In this way Miss Louisa Anne Twamley, the

bright-eyed authoress of the "Banks of the Wye," was, among others, induced to call on M. Bally and favour him with a sitting.

It may be that my services in the way of inquiry and recommendation (for Bally was not without ability, which recommended itself) were of little value to my friend of the casts, but he chose to stimulate my zeal by promising to take my own cast by way of reward. I thought M. Bally a very obliging man, and published his professional skill far and wide.

At last the auspicious morning arrived when I was to be immortalized in plaster. My hair was combed in appropriate order—I had put on our best family face, for my ancestors had pride of race. At last the factory bell rang nine—between that and ten breakfast had to be eaten, Bally to be visited, and the cast to be taken. But breakfast that morning took little time. I soon left the Old Wharf wall (above which the Foundry stood), vaulted along Paradise Street (I still speak of Birmingham), and by a quarter past nine I was in Upper Temple Street at M. Bally's door. A ring of the bell brought a maid down, who informed me that "M. Bally had gone to Manchester the day before."

When the door was closed I sat down on the step. I had made no bargain with Bally. I never made a bargain with anybody, but simply believed those who made one with me. When I comprehended, though outside, how completely I was "taken in," I returned to my work, when the anodyne-toned "Never mind, George," of my father dispelled my disappointment, and set me laughing at my credulity, without forgetting it, and made reflections in my crude way, how a small breach of faith on the part of a man may sow distrust in the mind of a youth. It was an inextinguishable instinct with me that, if a thing was wrong, it ought to be put right, and the wrong never passed out of my mind until the opportunity came of resenting or rectifying it. Many times have I been sorry that I had this quality of mind. It has been the source of loss and peril to me. At that time, however, it seemed a duty to me not to pass injustice over. I still think so, though I have a clearer conception of the consequences. Therefore, to find out M. Bally and give him to understand that I understood his peculiar mode of business, became an object with me. Some time after I became unwell,

mainly through too little sleep. In addition to being early at work and late at night at classes, I and three fellow-students sat up one night a week with our books. This was sheer foolishness, since the physical power of learning was decreased by it. The physiology of thought was unknown to us. My medicine man, as the Indians call him, advised a few weeks' travel on foot. This mode of travel suited my means, and I set out, taking the way which led through Manchester, though I knew it was not the city of recreation; but I thought thereby I might fall in with my old friend the professor of plaster casts. Day by day, as I proceeded on my valetudinarian way, I was cheered by this hope. Several days were spent in passing through Burton, Derby, Matlock, and Buxton. The memory of my first night in Manchester still remains with me. Fever and delirium came and whirled the room round where I lay on a bed, kindly made for me on the floor in a Socialist's house, amid bales of broadcloth. The next morning I wandered down to King Street, where, with better success than in Birmingham, I asked for M. Bally.

"Mon Dieu! Meester Holihoke,"—so far as at this distance of time I can reproduce his manner of speaking—exclaimed the man of busts, as he saw me enter his room. "Mon Dieu, Meester Bally," I replied, "it is very proper we should meet once more." "Vell, really, you see I couldn't. I vent away. I didn't intend—I meant——" M. Bally replied, with other inconclusive sentences. "Ah, Mr. Bally," I added, "never mind. If you thought me too unimportant a person to keep a promise to, you should have thought me too unimportant to make me one. How is a young man to learn lessons of good faith if his elders do not teach them? It was not right to do what you have, and to tell you so was all I came for. I wish no more, except that I wish you good-morning." That evasive Swiss I never saw more.



## CHAPTER XV.

### *A TOUR ON FOOT.*

(1838.)

My early religious impressions were waning, yet I had set out on my travels very much in the state of the apostles, who carried neither purse nor scrip. The state of my purse was like Mr. Spurgeon's chapel funds—a subject for prayer. It contained but five sovereigns for a five weeks' tour. Yet, without making any addition to it, several shillings remained on my return. My object was to go to the Isle of Man, as I could see the sea there.

Many incidents of the journey still enrich my memory. As they might not equally interest the reader, I pass them over. An old pocket map of the main roads of England was my guide. Railways had not then intersected the country, and a map of 1780 was still of use to a pedestrian in 1838. Besides, as every road was of interest to me, it did not matter whether there was a nearer one. Columbus was not more enchanted at seeing new lands than I was at seeing new places. Often I wished I had been born a geographer with a mission to make a map of the world and see it first. When I arrived at Matlock in Derbyshire, it was the time of the wakes. Having engaged a bed at a large inn, about ten o'clock I asked to be shown to my room. The pressure of custom was given as an excuse for delay. At twelve o'clock, thinking the delay had lasted long enough, I repeated my request, when I was told that, by reason of demands upon them, owing to the wake, no bed remained at their disposal, and that I must seek one elsewhere. Upon this I offered to sleep on a bench in one of the rooms.

Being refused, I remonstrated, saying they had no right, after contract made, to turn out a traveller and a stranger into the streets at midnight, where he knew no one, nor the road to another inn. As they had kept me four hours in the house under promise of a bed, until it was too late to expect that any other inn was open, I demanded the name of the nearest magistrate, whom I would call up and claim his interference. They professed ignorance of his name, and I had to take my knapsack and go out into the street, which was then very dark. Unable to discover any house open, or find any one to direct me, there seemed no prospect of shelter, when, coming upon a young woman parting from her lover, I appealed to them—to her chiefly, a woman having quicker sympathy for a stranger in need than a man. On her instigation “Alfred” bethought himself that down a near lane there was a small public-house still open. It proved to be full of wake revellers and a young fiddler playing for dancers. The mistress was a compassionate person, who said they had but one spare bed, which was reserved for the fiddler, but if he was willing I might share it. He was a pleasant youth of my own age, who, being conciliated by a glass of ale, agreed to the arrangement, provided I would wait until the dancing was over. This did not happen until three o'clock in the morning. As the bed only accommodated one, and being anxious not to incommode him, I slept on the edge, where I was so delicately poised that a dream on the wrong side of my head would have destroyed my balance. A lecture at the Mechanics' Institution on the then new theory of the “Duality of the Brain,” which I had recently heard, put this conceit into my mind. In the morning, finding my friend had a reading disposition, I gave him some numbers of the *Penny Magazine*, which I had with me, the illustrations of which were new to him, as he appeared never to have seen a paper with pictures. They proved as valuable as glass beads in dealing with Indians. He declared them a sufficient reward for his accommodation, as he had incurred no expense on my account—at which I was very glad, as it left my limited purse undiminished.

The cliffs, dells, and surprising scenery of Derbyshire, of which I had no previous idea, delighted me. Stale, flat, and commonplace was the district in which I had lived, compared with the scenes amid which I now wandered. No bridge, no stream, no

mountain, no castle, no battle-ground, no spot of historic beauty, had hitherto met my sight. Over the foundry walls where I worked had come gleams of the sun, which had made me long to see the outlying world on which it shone unconfined. Now I was in that world : happy days were those, for my heart was as light as my purse !

Buxton, though then in its infancy compared with its present attractions, was marvellous in my eyes. Whenever I could I lodged in cottages, as I was not obliged to buy beer "for the good of the house," and a basin of milk was cheaper and served for the third meal of the day. A pale-faced young traveller, of unforbidding aspect and his head full of town ideas, was—when there were no penny papers to give news—sometimes as welcome in English country places as a New York "prospector" at a prairie farm in the Far West. I found it so. Often the husband would sit up until a late hour conversing. Sometimes I thought the cottagers regarded me as a pedlar of news, since they made me only very moderate charges for my night's accommodation. Breakfast I never took, under pretext that I had to be early on my way, and for twopence I could buy on the wayside what was sufficient for me.

It was a surprise to me to find myself often taken to be a foreigner. It might be from my peculiar voice, or from my freedom of manner and speech. Most English persons go without information rather than ask it of strangers. With what civility was possible to me I asked it at once of any one at hand, and entered into conversation with any one whom I thought would speak again, and, if doubtful whether they would, I tried it. Thus, many hours which otherwise had been dull became bright, and myself better informed. Professing to know but little (which was more true than was thought), and saying I was one of the few persons extant who was without any conviction of his own infallibility—often gave persons good heart to tell me what they knew. Any interest in my conversation was owing to my having been a teacher of others—in Sunday School and classes—what little I knew best I had mostly learned myself : and as I had enthusiasm in describing the stages through which my own dulness had passed, I acquired confidence, and imparted it.

At length one Sunday at noon I entered Manchester, with no

little astonishment at its extent, its mills, its buildings, and its incessant streets. I found my way to the pretty little Social Institute which I knew existed in Salford, where I should meet some friends familiar with my name, as it had been mentioned in the *New Moral World*, read there. Not long before, James Morrison had died. He was the first editor of ability and enthusiasm the Trades Unionists had. His paper, the *Pioneer*, was friendly to co-operation. His widow, a pleasant little person, was mistress of the tea-parties at the Salford Institute, where I spent the remainder of the day very happily, and heard the afternoon and evening lectures. There I first met Joseph Smith, whose zeal had built the hall, and who forty-six years later died of sudden pleasure at Wissahickon, near Philadelphia, on reading an account I had written of him in the History of Co-operation in England, when he thought himself forgotten. But of him mention may be made later.

Of course, as already related, I spent the first morning in Manchester in paying an unlooked-for visit to my absconding friend, Bally, of whom the reader has heard.

It was from regard to my purse that I rose at four o'clock on my last morning in Manchester, to go by the early boat down the Bridgewater Canal to Liverpool. The canal, however, had charms of its own for me, and I much desired to be upon it, as I had often coveted the life of a boat-boy who went through romantic scenery and by strange towns, day and night.

After enchanted days in Liverpool among ships—never having seen any before—I one morning stepped into a small steamer going to the Isle of Man. John Green, a Social missionary stationed in the town (and who was afterwards cut into two parts on a New York railway), came down to the quayside to see me. He had heard of me as a young speaker on the same side as himself. Not knowing me, and learning I was leaving by that boat, he called from the quayside, "Holyoake, Holyoake!" I remember I was as much startled at hearing my name as Robinson Crusoe was when the parrot first called out his. Never being a traveller before, I felt on the vessel like a stranger in a new country—if the sea-coast can be considered a country. On the way to the Isle of Man we had bad weather, and were hours going over. An old lady died from fright or sickness on the passage. She was covered over with tarpaulin,

to prevent lady passengers being further affrighted. In the Isle of Man I came to know the pleasant editor of the *Manx Herald*, who invited me to write him a letter concerning the Birmingham Mechanics' Institution. It was my first letter to a newspaper. There seemed to be little money at the office, and I was paid for my contribution by a roast chicken and a pint bottle of port wine. It is natural I should remember this, for I have since made many contributions to papers for which I should have been glad to be requited as I was in that honest island. I spent a pleasant week in Douglas, where fish and eggs were then marvellously cheap. My landlady would often cook me five small fish, when I asked only for three. She said fish did not count in Douglas.

On my return to England I wandered through North Wales, and arrived at the slate quarries in the neighbourhood of Llanberis on a Sunday morning. At a house at which I inquired my way, a little girl, about six years of age, who had died, was about to be carried to the church at the foot of Snowdon. That being my destination I asked leave to accompany the funeral party. To my surprise the coffin consisted merely of a long narrow box with a long rope loop on either side, which two active Welsh girls took hold of, and rapidly descended the mountain side, the coffin swinging between them. Half a dozen relatives of the poor child made the procession. As the distance was two or three miles, and the sun hot, the fatigue of the journey was beyond my expectation. The girls leaped like goats from boulder to boulder as they descended to the valley. With my knapsack and overcoat I found it no easy task to keep up with them, but as I could discern no path among the slate quarries, I was compelled to keep them in sight. When we reached the old church it was an hour before the time when the clergyman was expected. I examined the church, and stepped into the pulpit—much to the surprise of the mourners—to look at the Welsh Bible, as I had never seen one. That night I slept at the inn at the foot of Snowdon, and when in bed smoked a portion of a cigar for the first time. My reason was, having been told it might make me giddy, I thought falling would be impossible in bed. That night I slept well, and remained in bed twelve hours. For months I had not been able to lie there six. Though I ascribed the effect to the cigar.

the probability was that my violent exertions in keeping up with the funeral party had more to do with it.

The next morning I went to Bettws-y-Coed. On my way over the mountain I walked through a cloud charged with snow, which, as I had never been in one before, interested me very much. Afterwards, I fell in with a party of four persons—a man and his wife, a young girl and her father—walking leisurely along. The men told me they were tailors from Coventry, who each year made an excursion in that way through some part of England they had not seen. They had saved a little money for the purpose, which seemed to me a very wholesome and intelligent thing to do, and deserved imitation by more people of that occupation. As I wished for company, and they some variety of conversation, it was agreed that I should travel with them, paying one-fifth of the travelling expenses, which I had previously ascertained were small. Their plan was to lunch at an inn door at mid-day on bread and cheese and a little ale. The little enterprising wife would visit some farmhouse on the way and buy a pullet, a piece of bacon, and vegetables. These the strongest man of the party, who was short and robust, carried in a carpet bag. When the day's walking was completed and roadside spots of interest visited, a quiet picturesque inn was selected, where, for a small payment, we had the use of the kitchen fire, when the wife and daughter of the party prepared a meal and made a cheaper bargain for the night by engaging beds for the whole five. Setting out in the early morning, buying a loaf and butter on our way, we made in due time a repast under a tree, after obtaining warm milk from a farmhouse; and so we travelled many days with much pleasure and economy.

While we were together the conversation fell mostly to me. My companions were all religious, as that term was then understood—and knew nothing else. They had heard only preachers of their own sect, and were not connoisseurs even in sermons. Then I became sensible, as I had never been before, of the advantage of going ever so little outside the circumscribed and monotonous area of evangelical theology. The literature of the human world had princely ideas which I found would come and dwell with whoever would receive them: and that even the poorest person might keep an open mind, hospitable

as a baronial hall, where kingliest thoughts of genius would visit and stay, so long as they were welcome, and even attend their entertainer as a lordly retinue whenever he went abroad. True, I had few of these retainers with me, but what I had I was pleased to show and my companions pleased to see—judging from their manner.

When we parted, it was with the hope that we might meet again in the same way. Before ending my travels, I went to Boscobel to see the oak in which Charles II. was said to have hidden from his pursuers—though history has never explained that the nation had any advantage in his escaping or returning. I arrived in Birmingham after nearly six weeks' absence, much refreshed and instructed by my first adventure into the outer world.

Now I had seen the mountains where Nature keeps an outlook on her dominions, hamlets sleeping in their morning beauty, and incessant towns where nothing is still. I had seen even the bewitching peace of the sea and had been on it when it was roused to imperious resentment by the irresponsible and ruffianly winds. No more did I believe in the predictions that monotony would prevail as civilization extended. What I had seen convinced me that not even ignorance could repress the resilient diversity of humanity, and that new knowledge infinitely multiplied itself.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### *PARTNERSHIP IN PROPAGANDISM.*

(1839.)

A LIFE of a propagandist I do not remember ever to have seen. Some wiser person than myself may one day write such a life. There are unobserved tragedies in propagandism as moving as any which befall better understood adventures of romantic war. To be married to ideas interferes with the felicities of the other kind of marriage, which men value. The world has seen two famous philosophers, Mill and Carlyle, write impassioned praise of their wives. In Mill it was gratitude—in Carlyle, remorse. John Stuart Mill was married to ideas, and the impassioned eulogy he wrote upon Mrs. Mill, after her death, reads like the cry of regret as well as of love. She deserved regard, inasmuch that she knew his chief life was in his ideas, and was intelligently content with such attentions as befell her, when leisure came to him. When her loss made him sensible of her fine devotion, his affection became conscious to him. It was so with Carlyle. His wife married him from pride in his genius, but afterwards she pined for attentions which he, engrossed in his great thoughts, never paused to give. When he came to read her letters after her death, his heart awoke, and he made what reparation he could by justly directing the publication of her letters—although they told against himself.

There is no comparison between myself and these eminent propagandists whom I have named—nor do I intend to suggest it, save in the sense that private soldiers share the perils of the war of ideas as well as the generals. That is all I mean to imply. My acquaintance with my future wife was when she

lived in the house of the chief Unitarian bookseller in Birmingham, James Belcher, whose father had been imprisoned in Warwick Gaol in Dr. Priestley's days for selling heterodox works, political and religious. The favourite publication of the young "person" (to use Mill's term) here referred to, was *Chambers's Journal*. It implied a native human taste to like the practical human knowledge of the affairs of this life, in one who had been a chorister girl in Wordesley Church, where the teaching was unearthly and unuseful.

We were married in 1839, at the office of my townsman William Pare, Registrär. I took care to explain beforehand to her whom it most concerned, that I had enlisted in the Order of Industry, which did little for its recruits. Yet to try to improve the fortunes of that order was to be my lot, and I could no more be counted upon at home than the sailor or soldier; and that my means would be as uncertain as duty. We neither of us knew all that sort of compact meant. During forty years, she neither uttered nor thought a reproach, though imprisonment, want, and death to her child came of it. She was herself a soldier's daughter, and had the courage of one. She met a calamity as a soldier meets a shot. If I repeated Lord Bacon's saying, "He who marries gives hostages to fortune that he will never do anything great," she would say, "We may not do great things, but we can do honest ones. Do what you think right, and never mind me." At no time did I inquire what her opinions were on theological subjects, nor interrogate my children thereupon, but wished them to form their own opinions; only counselling them to acquaint themselves with both sides of every question interesting to them, and to have clear grounds for their conclusions. My propagandism consisted in explaining things—never in persuading, since the responsibility of holding opinions belonged to those who accepted them. My own opinion was not concealed, for I always distrusted and often conceived contempt for the silent, whose philosophical impartiality ended in concealing their own thoughts. My doctrine was that decision should be made on the fullest knowledge obtainable: the duty of choice belonged to those who were to be answerable for the opinions entertained.

My wife had a way of speaking and writing more clear,

simple, and compact than mine, by which I was instructed. My tendency and my fault were to say too much about everything, whereas she would express spontaneously in a few words all that the occasion required. I could not by art attain what she attained without it. A "bit of her mind" was always worth having. Like a piece of malachite, the whole quarry was the same, and all good. But praise is vain without some illustration which enables the reader to test it. It was in impromptu decisions in which she excelled. Of examples of her writing, two instances are at hand—written when she was a very young woman, and not known to me until many years after. The first is a letter to my sister Caroline :—

"As to the famine, on account of which a fast is ordered, I am disposed to think that by the time it reaches her Majesty, there will be other means resorted to for its removal than praying, and more honest and manly means might be resorted to on the present occasion. I question whether the famine much affects the landowners. Why not allow the land to be cultivated for the support of poor wretches who are suffering instead of idly praying? It does not say much for the humanity of the Being the people are directed to call upon, if the sight of their misery does not elicit His attention without a formal prayer. I fear the fast is only a deceitful way of pacifying hunger, fearing that hunger may induce the hungry to eat food where they find it. I cannot think that any humane being would inflict more misery on the poor than they already suffer. It puzzles me to make out what men are educated for, or what they do with their philosophy. Do men call upon the Supreme Being to build houses for them when they fall? When suffering from ill-health, they try to find out a remedy—they do not trust to prayer alone. It is very odd people are always talking of the wisdom and goodness of God, and yet they cannot trust His wisdom and goodness. Most assuredly we never trust those we have no confidence in."

The other citation is a note on Harriet Martineau's "Household Education" :—

"We often speak about a very important part of our

character—honesty ; but, I think, seldom look at the subject fairly, for, when we come to scrutinize the matter, we often find ourselves anxious to fulfil every obligation, not merely money matters alone—yet very often one very important feature of honesty we are not equal to, which, I think, a great weakness—that is, demanding with the same firmness what is due to us. That, I think, requires considerable moral courage, which, in justice to ourselves as well as to other persons, we ought to cultivate, and not trust to our silently wishing that other persons should fulfil their engagements as punctually as ourselves."

Of Madeline, our first daughter, who perished during my imprisonment, I speak in another chapter. Max, our boy of nine years, was killed by a cabman who ran over him at the corner of Tavistock Street, Tavistock Square. A gentleman whose name I never knew carried him tenderly to University College Hospital. His own clothes were spoiled by the blood. I could never learn who he was to thank him for all that kindness. At the inquest I was allowed to make a statement as to the recklessness of the cabman who killed him, but was told that I could not give evidence against him, as I was unable to take the oath. Max's favourite hand-brush and toys were put in his coffin with him. In the grave of Peruvian women a fan is sometimes found in their hands, and the faded feathers of parrots and humming-birds. The graves of children oft contain a girl's workbox or a boy's sling. We buried the poor fellow like a little Peruvian. My friend, Mr. C. D. Collet, sang over his grave Miss Martineau's fine hymn, beginning :—

" Beneath this starry arch,  
Nought resteth or is still :  
And all things have their march  
As if—by one great will,  
Moves one, move all.  
Hark ! to the footfall !  
On, on, for ever."

On bringing to my wife's table any one with whom I intended to act, she would predict what I had to expect. "While you are near to revise his acts, you will have a good assistant in such a one," she would say, "but if left to his own responsi-

bility he will fail you." Of another she would say, "You will have a good colleague in him ; but unless you are prepared to abdicate your own opinion in all things, when you differ from him, you will have an enemy." When I was not able to accept her judgment I had reason afterwards to regret it.

Great pleasure was possible in the household with her, because she had the elementary sense of taste—though not acquired in the schools. Her preference was for one or two things of real worth and beauty ; she was impatient of a crowd of commonplace objects, which infect as well as occupy the space in which alone things of beauty can be seen or live.

To the reader who thinks the writer dwells too long on this subject he apologizes in the lines of the poet :—

" . . . Those who living filled the smallest space,  
In death have often left the greatest void.  
When from his dazzling sphere the mighty falls,  
Men, proud of showing interest in his fate,  
Run to each other, and with oaths protest  
How wretched and how desolate they are.  
The good depart, and silent are the good."

Mrs. Holyoake died at Brighton, 1884. For nearly eighteen years she had resided in Sudbury, Harrow-on-the-Hill. Always loving the country and flowers, her little garden was bright with them earlier and later than her neighbours'. In the last days of her illness, valued words of sympathy came to her from Lady Tennyson.

We brought Mrs. Holyoake to Highgate, to sleep in the grave with her son Maximilian.

In an undefined way she considered herself a Churchwoman, and would have been definitely so, had the nobler form of Theism, which the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke holds, been recognized in her early days. I could think of no other clergyman for whom I had so much regard, and whose presence at her grave would give so much satisfaction to her, and I therefore asked him to do me the great favour of conducting such service as he might see fit in the chapel.

Mr. Brooke sent a letter which in its generous consideration and sympathy was of the nature of a service :—

"January 15, 1884.

"MY DEAR MR. HOLYOAKE,—I am very sorry—for I should

have liked to have done this—that I cannot come on Wednesday. I have a close engagement which I cannot get rid of ; a special business which must be done that day. I wish I could have known of your desire earlier, but now it is too late. I am very sorry for your loss. It is a very grievous thing, as I know full well, to part with one who has slept at one's side for years, and been at home with one's heart. There is nothing which fills that relationship ; and I feel a heartfelt grief for you. But you have work to do, which, as I think, will still be loved by her, and still sympathized with by her ; and work heals enough of the heart to make life possible, though nothing heals it altogether. Loss is loss, let men say what they will.

“I wish I could see you now and again. When you come up to London, let me know. I have never forgotten my talks with you. Yours most sincerely,

“S. A. BROOKE.”

Thus it fell to me to speak at her grave. What I said follows.

The only public wish I knew her to have was that some one should say a few words at her grave as it had been my custom to do often at the graves of others.

I read the remarkable conversation between the angel Uriel and the prophet Esdras, whom the angel rebukes for his discontent at not knowing the secrets of the Most High when he had not comprehended that which passed before him in daily life. Then the prophet with instructed sense was content to ask for understanding of that which most concerned him to know.

This was the measure of her unformulated reverence and conviction—willing to know what could be known, but always acting on what could be understood. Simplicity, directness, and unaffectedness were preferences of hers. Show in speech, like show in life, seemed to her want of taste. She had three qualities beyond most women—service, truth, and pride. Such was the spontaneity of her sense of service of others, that she never thought of herself, which was a misfortune in one sense, since it is a kindness which is blindness, as it must involve others in cares. Yet without some of this self-abnegation in women public affairs could never be attended to by men. The

truth she cared for was not only of speech but of conduct—the only form of truth which can be trusted. Of this she had so clear a sense that the absence of it in others was not concealable from her. Her pride was more than self-respect : it was debtlessness, an independence of obligation, which was not a second nature, it was her first, and she had had no other. In the days when our income was the least and most precarious, she never had even a small debt. It was not conceivable by her that I should stand on a platform and speak of political, social, or religious reform, and owe people money. When it was clear that the end of all things to her was at hand, her last inquiry was whether I had paid some small accounts due at Harrow. I had done so, and afterwards I pensioned her cat, and kept up the small annual gifts she was accustomed to make. The lines of my friend, Mr. Percy Greg, are her epitaph—

“ The martyr's cross, without the martyr's cause,  
The grief, the wrong, without the self-applause,  
The homely round of duties nobly done :—  
These were her life, who sleeps beneath this stone.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### *THE INSURGENT AFFAIR IN THE BULL RING, BIRMINGHAM.*

(1839.)

THE first insurgent affair of which I was a witness, and if not an actor a sympathizer, was in the Birmingham Bull Ring.

When the middle class had got their £10 franchise, they did not see what the working class wanted with votes. The Whigs had no sympathies for and the Tories had active dislike of the poor Chartists, and described their unfriended, indigent, and generous advocates as "hired orators." Harmless meetings were held nightly around the Nelson Monument. The "Friends of the People," as they called themselves after the manner of Marat, were listened to with greedy ears. The wilder the speeches the more they were applauded—because their extravagance implied sympathy and indignation. Despair was diffused like a pestilence. Invasion itself would have excited acquiescence. As the Berlineses cheered the arrival of the first Napoleon, Birmingham would have welcomed invaders, if they came in the disguise of deliverers.

In any change of masters there was hope, since the prospects of the working class could not, it was thought, be worse. Not the ignorant alone, but educated men, then and since, were of the same way of thinking, and said so. Then fairness was regarded as feebleness. There was nothing too mad to be believed, nothing too malignant to be said, and that not of alien rule, but of a class in the same town. Hundreds made arms secretly. Those who had no better weapons sharpened an old file and stuck it in a haft. I saw many such. A dozen

gentlemen in the town, who had sympathy with the just discontent of the people, could have kept the peace with applause. The sapient and contemptuous magistrates sent for one hundred policemen from London. Magistrates oftener break the peace than workmen, as they do in Ireland, as they did at Peterloo in 1819—as Sir Charles Warren and Mr. Matthews, acting on their ideas of public duty, did in Trafalgar Square in 1887.<sup>1</sup> Birmingham would not be kept in order by London police, though they were at least their own countrymen, and the Chartists broke down the iron railings around St. Thomas's Church, and drove the London contingent out of the Bull Ring. I have often wondered what Irishmen must think of having their heads broken by alien ruffians of order, sent over from England, when Birmingham men treated London policemen as aliens. Some frenzied men set fire to houses in revenge. Soldiers were brought out, and a neighbour of mine, who happened to be standing unarmed and looking on at the corner of Edgbaston Street, had his nose chopped off. Soldiers, like policemen, soon know when outrages are expected of them. There was no resistance after the police were driven away. At four o'clock next morning I went with my wife, who wished to see whether Mr. Belcher, whose house had been fired, needed aid in his household, as she had great respect for him. Although we alone crossed the Bull Ring, the soldiers rushed at us, and tried to cut me down. I did not like them. Until then I thought the duty of a policeman or soldier was to keep his head, protect the people, and keep the peace except in self-defence. The town was sullen and turbulent, and had good reason to be so. Whoever judges the capacity of Birmingham for freedom, tolerance, and self-government, by the language and acts of that time, would judge it as Ireland is judged to-day. Any Whig, and more so the Tories, would have declared it madness to trust the people of the town with municipal or Parliamentary vote. Yet, when they had both, Birmingham became the best governed town in Great Britain. It has been accorded the distinction of being a city now, and I from being a townsman have become a citizen.

Mr. George Julian Harney was in the town at the time of the

<sup>1</sup> Had the genius of Sir Charles Napier been present, who in his day encountered armed Chartists, there had been neither conflict nor ill-feeling. It is manner which enrages, not persons.

"riots." It was then I first knew him. It was said he kept out of the way ; but he did not.<sup>1</sup> He lived in a by-street near the Bull Ring, and I opposite to him, and saw him daily in the riot week standing at the door openly.

In justice to the gentlemen of Birmingham, it ought to be said that the Chartists assailed them by hateful epithets as being Whigs and middle-class traitors, which disinclined them to take part with the people where they thought their claims well founded. If any working men wished to see fairer treatment of gentlemen, they were themselves denounced "moderates" and agents of the "middle class." Still the gentlemen had got all they wanted and were educated, and should have had generous forbearance towards men less informed and incensed with real wrongs.

Though a Chartist myself and always acting with the party, I never joined in their war upon the Whigs. The Tories, as my friend Charles Reece Pemberton said, "would rob you of £1 and give you twopence back." The Whigs would not give you twopence, neither did they rob you of the pound, and were in favour of that legislation which would enable you to earn a shilling for yourself and keep the pound in your pocket. The Whigs were the traditional friends of liberty. The Tories were always against it. The Chartists suffered indignities at the hands of the Whigs and allowed their resentment to shape their policy. To spite the Whigs the Chartists gave their support to the Tories—their hereditary and unchanging enemies. The Whigs were the only political party standing between the people and the aggressive masterfulness of the Tories. It was upon Chartist resentment towards the Whigs that Lord Beaconsfield traded—and supplied the Chartist leaders with money to enable them to express it. I knew many who took money for that purpose. Francis Place showed me cheques paid to them to break up Anti-Corn Law meetings, because that cause was defended by Whigs. I saw the cheques which were sent to Place by Sir John Easthope and other bankers, who had cashed them. In some of Place's books which were sold to Josiah Parkes, and afterwards went to the British Museum, Chartist cheques may possibly still be seen. At the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Harney informs me that he was not liberated on bail from Warwick Gaol until the evening of the fires.

same time these Chartists were neither mercenary nor traitors. They did not take the money to betray their own cause, nor for their personal use, but to defray the expenses of agitation against the Whigs, who had treated Mr. Ernest Jones as Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour afterwards treated Mr. O'Brien. There was no contempt or hatred within the limits of not sacrificing principle which was not justifiable against them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### *A KNAVE WHO WANTED LESSONS IN MATHEMATICS.*

(1840.)

SUCH a one was my first pupil. No phrase of indignation occurs to me adequate to describe my impressions of him.

In 1839 we were living in our first house, in the Sandpits, Birmingham. It was on the verge of the town then. A bright, fresh aspect of verdure lay before the window. A little speaking, a little teaching, a little secretaryship work, alternately or altogether, produced very little income for home. My wife cultivated a small bed of mustard and cress under the window, which, with bread, served for a meal when there was nothing else. She was always bright and reticent to her neighbours, but a butcher's wife next door, observing little was bought from them, thought things were not flourishing, and would sometimes bring a cup of porter to the gate, and ask, in a friendly way, her pale-faced neighbour to take a little with her, not assuming there was need for it, and not knowing how to offer anything else.

One morning in January, a portly, respectable-looking gentleman dressed in drab, whom I at first took for a farmer, knocked at the door and asked "whether he was rightly informed that he could have lessons in mathematics there." He did not say by whom he had been so informed, and I was too glad of the inquiry being made to ask him. He was told that "if he wished instruction in Euclid he could have lessons from one to two hours every morning at a moderate rate." He said, "That would do," and arranged to come next day. Nothing further

was said as to terms, as anything he might think reasonable it was worth my while to accept.

Firing was very scant in the house, but the grate was made as cheerful as possible—the table arranged, and diagram material put ready. For five days this unknown visitor came each morning. He paid attention, was inquiring, and seemed interested, but paid nothing. Afraid, by pressing him for payment too soon, of losing a pupil I so much needed, I did not ask him. The next week he repeated his visits. My wife, who was always far more discerning than I was, said, "That man does not intend to pay." To me it was inconceivable. I had taught, as an assistant in a school, all day for 10s. a week and my dinner, and for 10s. 6d. a week without my dinner, but I had always been paid. However, at the end of the second week, I remarked that "I should be glad if he would pay me for the lessons so far." The drab fiend started up, took his hat, and said "he did not intend to pay anything. I had made no bargain as to terms, and he was not bound to give anything." And, after opening the door, he turned round to say—"Young man, let this be a lesson to you. Never do anything for anybody unless you know you will be paid for it. If you follow this rule—and I can see you need it—you will gain a great deal more than you have now lost by giving lessons to me." My contempt and indignation had but one expression—a desire to knock the moralizing knave down; but he was a much more powerful man than I. A woman seldom stands calculating whether a thing can be done. If it ought to be done she generally does it, and my wife would have driven the treacherous student into the streets with a chair had she not remembered that the loss of it was more than she could afford for breaking the knave's head. It occurred to me when it was too late that I did not know who he was, or whence he came, and I could no more sue him than I could a thief who had made tracks and left no address.

What was the didactic scoundrel's object in coming to my door I could never make out—probably to discover what my opinions were, as I had been engaged by the Mechanics' Institution, which had many clerical enemies. But I might have been a curate for anything my pupil could make out, for I was no Pauline believer who spoke of personal views "out of season."

Nevertheless, the rascal's "rule" was worth remembering. It would have been well for me had I regarded it with limitations, though it is a rule that would often lead to selfishness and meanness. I have walked hundreds of miles to speak for nothing, when I knew I should have nothing. I have executed hundreds of commissions, paying cost as well as giving labour, when those who wanted the work done could afford to pay for it, and would have done so, had they any idea it was necessary. I never suggested it, lest it should be thought I wanted to make a profit out of a public service. The fault was mine in two ways: first, I liked being useful, and that encouraged persons to give me opportunities; secondly, I could do nothing by halves, I did what I undertook as thoroughly as I could, and incurred cost and time, never intended or thought of by others.

Persons more wary than myself, I could see, when asked to do things made skilful evasions. "They knew nothing of the facts you might ask them for. They knew not where to refer to them. They had forgotten the details. They did not know who had them in mind. An engagement they could not forego prevented them giving time to the thing asked of them. They had no influence. They knew no one who could aid in the work.' What is always more successful, they threw doubts on the good of doing anything, which took the heart out of the inquirer. Such answers are at times real, but oftener I knew them to be given by persons who simply saw no prospect of return for the trouble proposed to them. I never studied the art of doing nothing when something ought to be done. This world would be a cold and shabby world in which nobody did anything unless assured of being paid for it. I have always been a rich man in the satisfaction I have had in what I have done. Still, I might have been reasonably rich in another sense, had I made out, in cases of service beyond my means, a small bill of costs, and collected it. Now I can see I ought to have done it, since others suffered for my scrupulousness.

Nevertheless, to this day I have hated the drab knave—as Cobbett did the "lame fiend" Talleyrand, who came to him for lessons—who first advised me to take special care of my own interests, and for years after I was accustomed to look in police offices and assize courts, expecting and desiring to catch sight of the rascal at the bar, where I hope and believe he must have arrived—though I never had the pleasure of knowing it.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### *A ROLL-CALL OF IMPRISONED FRIENDS.*

(1840-1890.)

IF the reader knew how many of my friends have been imprisoned, or have come to a worse end, suspicion would arise as to the prudence of proceeding further in my narrative. If no proof of such assertion is given, it may seem pretentiousness to make it; if it be substantiated, it may be said that I present a sort of Newgate Calendar of my friends, whereas the list of their names is mainly a roll-call of honourable penalties incurred in the service of society. To some I may recur in separate chapters.

The most illustrious were Garibaldi and Mazzini. Garibaldi had known imprisonment and torture. From youth to mature age he lived in an atmosphere of peril; his days passed in battle, in flight, in exile, in want, in adventure, and in the face of death by flood and field. Mazzini, greater than Garibaldi, as his sword had been blind had not the pen of Mazzini given it eyes, underwent vicissitudes of which imprisonment was the least forlorn and perilous. Mazzini was not merely the great deviser of action on behalf of liberty, but the inspirer of public passion which made Italian Unity possible. His life was sought in three nations. Only an Italian could have kept his head on his shoulders under such a fierce, organized, imperial, protracted competition for it.

Alberto Mario, the husband of Jessie Meriton White, was several times in Italian prisons, an intrepid soldier and Republican leader. He was the confidant of Garibaldi, by whose side he fought in his most adventurous campaigns, and was a

brilliant disciple of Mazzini. He was an orator as well as a soldier. Handsome, enthusiastic, and incorruptible, he exercised immense influence.

Orsini, who, like Garibaldi, had a passion for fatal enterprises, was beheaded. Pierri, without having any such passion, perished in the same way. Rudio only escaped the headsman's axe, it was said, by betraying his colleagues. Bottesini was one day called upon to play at the Tuileries, when Count Bacciocchi, Master of Ceremonies to Napoleon III., examined his double bass to see whether it contained Orsini bombs. Orsini headless was a terror to despots.

Aurelio Saffi, second Triumvir with Mazzini, shared the perils of the defence of Rome, and exile in England. He succeeded his great friend in representing the Republican principle with similar refinement, force, and fidelity. In his later years he was a professor in Bologna, and lived amid the winepresses and vineyards of Forli, honoured, as I found when last his guest there, as foremost of those whose intrepidity and devotion contributed to the freedom of Italy.

I had friendly and personal relations with several eminent Frenchmen who were in peril oft for freedom. Dr. Simon Bernard, known, like Blanqui, as a stormy petrel of revolution on the Continent, was involved in the Orsini affair, and his name became noised over the world. Dr. Bernard, as the reader will see, was in trouble before he took refuge in England. Eight prosecutions had been instituted against him; twice he had been condemned to imprisonment, and here he narrowly escaped the hangman. Some who were personally in contact with him came to share his danger.

Ledru Rollin was an exile here to escape the same fate. We always held him in honour, as Mazzini said he was the only Frenchman who sacrificed his political position for a country not his own—namely, for justice to Italy. I had the honour to defend him when in England. Mazzini never ceased to inspire friendships for him. Rollin was too little in England to understand us. Mr. Horace Mayhew's famous letters in the *Morning Chronicle* on the condition of the industrious classes in London, misled Rollin into the belief that England was played out. He was confirmed in this belief by the speeches of Tory orators in Parliament, who were always saying, when any measure of

reform was proposed, that the British Constitution was exploded, and that the sun of England was going down for ever. He did not know that the Tories are the professional defamers of the land. During more than half a century, to my knowledge, the sun of England has set for ever every year, and has always turned up again in the next spring. These whimsical predictions so bewildered Ledru Rollin that he published a book on the "Decadence of England," which caused him loss of prestige among us. He never observed that England had still vitality, since it was able to protect him against the wrath of the emperor of his own land, who would have pursued him here had he dared.

Louis Blanc I knew during all the years of his exile, and was invited by his family to his burial in Père la Chaise. Next to Mazzini, he was master, not only of the English tongue, but of English ways of thought, and understood the land. He made no mistake like Ledru Rollin. Louis Blanc showed me original records of the great French Revolution, amid which were letters stained with the blood of those who had written them. Louis Blanc was a small man, but he was so entirely a man—you never thought of his stature. He had an impressive face, a firm mouth, and was without any of that assumption of manner which small men often wear lest you should not recognize their importance. Louis Blanc had conscious power which needed no assertion. Though he acquired English staidness of deportment, his French fire broke out in platform speech. He was the greatest expositor of Republicanism, democratic and social, of his day. When Louis Blanc was first an exile here, he was not credited with the fine qualities he possessed, which became apparent in the protracted years of exile. Seventeen years after the Presidential treachery of 1852, the electors of the Seine, Marseilles, and other places besought him to reappear in Parliament, but he would take no oath of allegiance to the Usurper. He answered, "The distinction of Republicanism is inflexibility of principles—its love of the straight line—its solicitude for human dignity, and its passion for equality." In reply to the suggestion that he should take the oath, he remarked, "The oath, it is said, is an idle formality. Let us not repeat this word too often, if we desire to raise the standard of public morality. There is one man, the Emperor,

who has considered it a 'mere formality,' and France knows what has come of that." Louis Blanc added, "A noble example is an *act*." St. Just said, "Those who do nothing are strong"—when action is dishonour. Louis Blanc remained an exile until the fall of the emperor.

Louis Blanc had a brother, Charles, who was a member of the French Academy. M. Pailleron, who succeeded him, thus described both :—

"Charles was exuberant, passionate, even violent ; but easily resigned, amiable at bottom, and above everything good—a reed, painted like iron. Louis, on the contrary, was gentle, humble, timid, polite, almost obsequious ; yet beneath this mild exterior tenacious, resolute, rebellious—iron, painted so as to resemble a reed."

Of Carlo de Rudio and his troubles I have written in another chapter. He set himself forth as "Count" de Rudio, but if he were a count, his education had been neglected.

Victor Schœlcher, a stormy exile upon whom the French Emperor tried to lay hands, was a frequent visitor to the *Reasoner* office, and a frequent subscriber to our insurgent funds. He was a man of high character and strange experience, and in his day had rendered the State important service. After the fall of Louis Napoleon at Sedan, Schœlcher returned to France, and was accorded the dignity of a Senator. There are pretentious friends of the advance of society who, when they cannot do what they would, do nothing. Schœlcher, when he could not do all he wished, did what he could.

Ulric de Fonvielle, my friend and sometime host, accompanied Victor Noir on a visit to Prince Pierre Napoleon, who shot Victor Noir dead, and fired twice at Ulric de Fonvielle. A very uncivil gentleman was Prince Pierre Napoleon. Wilfrid de Fonvielle, an elder brother of Ulric, and I have been friends for nearly forty years. He was another stormy petrel of the Revolution, both on land and in the air, being an adventurous balloonist at the siege of Paris—distinguished for intrepidity and volcanic ardour, and as a barricadist, a journalist, a man of science, and author of notable books.

The brothers Reclus have both been in peril and prison as

philosophical anarchists. To Elie Reclus, because it had valued memories for him, I gave a fine copy of the only portrait of Robert Owen in which that famous social philosopher appeared as a gentleman—an aspect belonging to him which all other engravings of him missed. Reclus, in his last letter to me, said :—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I went to the Congresses of Lausanne and Geneva, where I saw your name in the hotel Gibbon des Bergues, but not your person. Afterwards I stayed in Auvergne, and now I must, in three or four days hence, be in Normandy. If you were here on the 15th, I might still have the joy of seeing you. My brother Elisée, whom I expect daily from a tour in the Pyrénées, will be here, and, I daresay, you will soon become friends together. I write to MM. Bewsdeley and Henry Schmahl, who are earnest co-operators, announcing to them your visit, and I trust they will be of some service to you. At the Crédit au Travail, rue Baillet 3 (behind St. Germain l'Auxerrois, near to the Rue de Rivoli), the accountant, Mr. Joseph Gaud, will be apprised of your arrival.”

Felix Pyat I never saw, though I was his publisher. He could never have kept his head upon his shoulders in France, and I incurred the risk of imprisonment in defending his right to use his head in England by publishing, in the face of prosecution, his “Letter on Parliament and the Press.”

Martin Nadaud was a Parisian workman who came to England for security. His intelligence, integrity, and manliness won for him the esteem of Mazzini. He worked at his trade in England, still giving his spare time to promoting freedom both in France and Italy. I found him in 1880 holding a permanent office in the French Parliament House, of which he was a member, always true to his order—the honest Order of Industry.

Alexander Herzen, the accomplished Russian who sent the *Kolokol* (the *Bell*) through the dominions of the Czar, had left Russia for good reasons. We met first at Southampton, where he was seeking information, which I gave him, where the meeting would take place in the Isle of Wight between Garibaldi and Mazzini.

A greater than Herzen was Karl Blind, whom I have still the pleasure to count among my friends. Before he did us the honour to reside in England, now nearly forty years ago, he had had terrible trials, experiencing casemate incarceration. Since then his name is known in every nation and in every literature where the lovers of freedom breathe.

Then there was Dr. Arnold Ruge, of the Frankfort Parliament, who escaped to us to avoid the fate of Blum, the bookseller, who was shot. He resided many years in Brighton, and I had the honour to publish a work which he wrote for me.

The giant Bakounine, who had fled from Russian prisons, was an oft visitor at Fleet Street.

Heinzen was another Russian propagandist, familiar with the interior of a fortress, who was a welcome visitor at the *Reasoner* office. He afterwards went to America, and was the author of many determined pamphlets on insurgency, displaying power and originality. One published in Chicago bore the unpleasant title of "Murder and Liberty."

Prince Krapotkin is the most accomplished anarchist, save the Recluses, whom I have known. No one who does not know the prince can imagine how bright, ardent, wise, and human he is. But the impression his writings give you is that his many attainments are tempered by dynamite. Prince Krapotkin is familiar with prisons: still he neither swerves nor fears.

Wilhelm Weitling was a German Communist. His "Gospel of Poor Sinners" was a book of force and original thought. He said he learned English from two works of mine ("Practical Grammar" and "Public Speaking") when first an exile in England. At some expense, I had his speeches translated and printed in the *Movement* when he first spoke in London, and thinking to serve him by enabling him to send copies to America, where he was going, I presented him with some. He, however, violently resented the act as a great affront, thinking I assumed that he had the vanity to diffuse his own speeches. He first taught me that foreigners were apt to be alien in mind as well as race, until naturalized by intercourse and knowledge. He came to England with the reputation of a "dangerous Communist." His liking of prison life in Germany did not grow by what it fed upon; so he, in 1848, tried London for a change, being expelled from Switzerland at the instigation of

the German Government. In one of his speeches in our John Street Institution in London (held by disciples of Robert Owen) he said what was new then, and is not yet old—that “there will neither be equality nor justice so long as those who labour are poorer than those who govern.” Wilhelm Weitling was born at Magdeburg in 1808, and died in America in 1871. He was the first after Babœuf who gave to Socialism a fighting policy, and his proceedings and apostolic advocacy were anxiously watched by various European Governments. In 1834 he formed the “League of the Proscribed.” This was followed by a “League of the Just,” a less happy and more pretentious title in the eyes of outsiders. Weitling was the leader of this League when he came to England. With all his public ardency, he followed his own industry for subsistence. He came one day to make my wife a dress, and I remember how surprised she was to be asked to take off her gown that he might more accurately make the measurement. Men dressmakers and their German customs were unknown to us. Weitling edited a journal in 1841 in which he advocated the formation of a co-operative society. Politics was with him a means to a social end.

Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian leader, acquired more rapidly than Blanc a wonderful mastery of English, but he never understood, any more than Garibaldi, our illogical freedom, or the mysteries of our political constitution. I published a bust of the Magyar orator, made for me by Signor Bezzi, and cheap editions of Kossuth's speeches. Kossuth would have been shot on sight had the Austrians got sight of him. Kossuth's wife, like Garibaldi's Anita, suffered the vicissitudes of war and flight. Though less inflexible than Mazzini or Blanc, and though he entered into political relations with the French Usurper, who was not to be trusted on his word any more than his oath, yet Kossuth gave proof of integrity when peril menaced him. His generals, Bem and Kemetty, adopted the Mahomedan faith for the sake of Ottoman protection. Kossuth bravely refused. Bem, when an exile in England, lived near me, a little off the Euston Road, and I used to meet him as he walked where Bolivar had walked before him, on the broad pavement that runs through Euston Square. Kossuth had studied English in the fortress of Buda. No orator ever spoke in a foreign tongue

with the effect with which he spoke in England. His ideas were as remarkable as his manner, and were an addition to our knowledge, as Toulmin Smith and Professor F. W. Newman testified.

Francis Pulzsky, the Hungarian Prime Minister under the Kossuth Government, narrowly escaped being shot by the Austrians. His youngest son, who wore a picturesque Hungarian dress at evening parties, which well became his handsome face, was a frequent visitor at my house while a student at the London University. Once or twice I dined with his father, who showed me six or seven iron-clasped chests, containing the Royal jewels and the Hungarian crown, which he had with him in an upper room of his house at Highgate (the second or third house at the bottom of Swain's Lane). Madame Pulzsky was a remarkably small, gentle lady, and you wondered that her sons should be men of fine stature. We conversed at table upon the noble moderation of the French in the Revolution of 1848, in not executing those who would have executed them had they been victors. The Usurper who, by the leniency of Republicans came into power, made short work with the Republicans, and shot and transported them by thousands. Madame Pulzsky had seen so many of her friends destroyed that she distrusted the policy of leniency, and said to me, "Mr. Holyoake, if we come into power again, we will cut all the throats we spared before!" The energy with which this was said by so gentle a lady was very impressive. I contented myself by answering that leniency did fail sometimes, and so did relentlessness, but I believed that in the long run the cause of liberty gains more by pardon than by death.

Among leaders of opinion whom I knew who incurred peril in America, the chief was Lloyd Garrison, who was dragged through Boston streets with a rope round his neck, and was imprisoned by the mayor to save him being lynched. In 1879 I had pride in speaking in Stacey Hall on the platform from which he was pulled down. Mr. Quincy, the son of the mayor who saved Garrison, was in the chair. Mr. Garrison lived to find himself honoured in two worlds—in America, and on this "aged" side of the Atlantic. Lord John Russell spoke at a public breakfast given to Garrison, and Mr. Bright made the most eloquent of

all the brief speeches I ever heard from him, and read a passage from the New Testament as I have never heard it read before or since—comparing the persecutions of Garrison with those of the Apostles. About 1850-2, he published in the *Liberator* a letter from Mr. W. J. Linton against me. But Lloyd Garrison was incapable of being mean or unfair, and published a reply from his valued correspondent, Edward Search. Harriet Martineau was also a reader of the *Liberator*, and as soon as she saw the Linton letter she wrote a most generous vindication of me—which was her custom towards any friend whom she knew to be unjustly assailed.

Others who were not hanged came, like Garrison, near to it, and deserve regard when they knowingly took that risk for the service of the unfriended slave, as Harriet Martineau did when in America. Men shrank from the peril she incurred, though men were ready to risk their lives in her defence. To prevent danger to them, she forewent journeys she contemplated, as her death was arranged for her on her way. Had the peril been hers alone, she would never have drawn back.

Not less did George Thompson risk death. Of him I heard Lord Brougham say "he had the most persuasive voice of any orator he ever listened to." And his competent testimony was confirmed by all who heard Thompson. On his two first visits to America, speaking for the slave, he was hunted to be "hanged on a sour apple-tree." On his third visit he dwelt with my friend, Mr. Seth Hunt, at his home under Mount Holyoke. He slept in the "Prophet's Chamber," where others in peril had slept before; and which in happier days I had the honour to occupy. But were I to mention all my friends who succoured the hunted and condemned, I must include here certain Englishmen, Colonel Hinton, of Washington; Mr. W. H. Ashurst; Mr. R. A. Cooper, of Norwich; Major Evans Bell, and many others. George Thompson afterwards became M.P. for the Tower Hamlets. Had his personal fortune enabled him to remain in the House of Commons, he would have become eminent there. Mr. F. W. Chesson, who continued through another generation the same noble exertions on behalf of the oppressed and unfriended in many nations, married Mr. Thompson's daughter.

Since Toussaint L'Ouverture, whose tragic story has been

written by Harriet Martineau in "The Hour and the Man," there has been no nobler champion of the coloured race than Frederic Douglas. He was born under sentence—the dread sentence of slavery—a doom of lifelong imprisonment without hope of ending. When wandering homeless at night about Peoria, no minister would open his doors to the slave (though Douglas was himself a preacher), when a passenger told him to knock at Colonel Robert Ingersoll's gate, and he would find shelter and welcome under the generous heretic's roof. It was in Ingersoll's house that I spent my first evening with the noble slave, who was then Provost Marshal of Washington. The colonel produced his choicest champagne to celebrate the event. It is told in the annals of slavery, that when Douglas was assailed and hissed on the platform by slave-owners, he paused, and then said, "Yes, a hiss is what you always hear when the waters of truth drop on the fires of hell." This saying is also ascribed to Clay, another orator for the freedom of the slave ; but it shows the quality of Douglas on the platform that the splendid retort should be related of him.

## CHAPTER XX.

### *ENGLISH AND IRISH AGITATORS WHO GAVE TROUBLE TO JURIES AND JUDGES.*

(1840-1890.)

THE reader will observe that some names are mentioned only incidentally, and others at more length. Some described here briefly are in other chapters further mentioned.

Another friend whom I knew, bearing a memorable name—Leigh Hunt—was imprisoned, as all the world knows, for his boldness in reminding a certain Royal personage that personal morality would be as useful in those of high as in those of humble station. Leigh Hunt's career was before my time, but I had the honour to know him in his later years, and still read with pride a published letter which he addressed to me. From his earlier years to his closing day, he never swerved from the perilous principle of saying what he thought right and knew to be useful, regardless of that cowardly policy of waiting on public opinion until the right thing can be done safely.

Madame Jessie White Mario was the first distinguished platform speaker among Englishwomen. When she first spoke on Italian questions, women had not spoken in public with the view of influencing State affairs. Madame Mario was more than Miss Nightingale at Scutari; she went with Garibaldi's expedition and rescued the wounded under fire. She was imprisoned in Genoa five months in 1857, in Ferrara where Tasso was incarcerated, and in Rome. As well as aiding by her intrepid services the cause of Italy, she wrote vindictory lives of the distinguished heroes whose names, before all others, represent the unity of that wondrous land. She told me at

Lendinara that, should a war arise between England and Italy, she had become so much Italian that she could not live and see Italy suffer ; yet she was at the same time English at heart, and could not bear the thought that her native land should fail. Therefore, should war occur, she should apply at St. Peter's Gate for some retreat in his dominions. Madame Mario has published works of authority on the lives of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Dr. Bertani, and others. It was "To Miss J. Meriton White" that Walter Savage Landor addressed the following letter, which caused great disquietude in the Tuileries. It first appeared in the *Atlas* newspaper under the intrepid editorship of Mr. Henry J. Slack :—

"At the present time I have only One Hundred Pounds of ready money at my disposal, and am never likely to have so much in future. Of this, I transmit FIVE to you, towards <sup>4</sup>*the acquisition of 10,000 Muskets to be given to the First Italian Province which shall rise.*' The remaining £95, I reserve for the Family of the First Patriot who asserts the dignity and performs the duty of tyrannicide. Abject men have cried out against me for my commendation of this Virtue, the highest of which a man is capable, and now the most imperative. Is it not an absurdity to remind us that usurpers will rise up afresh? Do not all transgressors? And must we therefore lay aside the terrors of chastisement, or give a *Ticket of Leave* to the most atrocious criminals? Shall the laws be subverted, and we be told that we act against them, or without their sanction, when none are left us, and when guided by Eternal Justice we smite down the subvertor? Three or four blows, instantaneous and simultaneous, may save the world many years of war and degradation. If it is unsafe to rob a Citizen, shall it be safe to rob a People?"

Before enumerating political advocates in England, insurgent publishers claim notice who, in a sense, made the advocates what they were, and created for them their auditors. Foremost among them—greatest, most determined and impassable of them all—was Richard Carlile, my friend and adviser at my own trial at Gloucester, and who had himself been imprisoned nine years and four months. In the "Dictionary of National

Biography," I have written Carlile's life. Acts of defiance of the evil Governments of his day, in which Carlile persisted, had been visited by a long term of transportation, as happened to Muir and Palmer. It was Carlile's intrepid publication of prohibited books which established the freedom of the press in England.

Next to him, and contemporaneous with him, was Henry Hetherington. The first time I spoke at a graveside was at Kensal Green, when Hetherington was buried amid a concourse of 2,000 persons. *The Times* said of him that he was one of a band "who were familiar with the inside of every gaol in the kingdom." Hetherington made no parade, no defiance, but was immovable. He did for the unstamped press what Carlile did for Freethought works. A disciple of Robert Owen, Hetherington was always for reason; but he had the courage of reason, which he was capable of infusing into others—for 500 persons were imprisoned for selling his unstamped papers. He defended trades unions when they were illegal, and had the merit of defining the policy which co-operative advocates of profit-sharing labour have maintained since.

James Watson was my first publisher. He was imprisoned several times for his persistence in publishing prohibited books and newspapers. Between Watson and Hetherington a remarkable friendship existed. Both published some earlier works for me, but neither would publish without understanding that it was consistent with the business interest of the other that he should do it.

John Cleave incurred imprisonment. He was a rotund, energetic, Radical publisher, and was the third of the trio of newsvendors whose names were known in every town and village in the three kingdoms—"Hetherington, Watson, and Cleave." Henry Vincent married Cleave's daughter. Cleave did not give others an impression that he had a passion for risk; but Watson and Hetherington, whenever peril came to others which they ought to share, placed themselves at once in the front rank of jeopardy.

Abel Heywood, in earlier years, published a work for me. The name of Heywood in the provinces was as famous as that of Hetherington in London. Heywood was imprisoned for the sale of unstamped publications. He was afterwards Mayor of

Manchester, and the Queen was dissuaded from visiting the city during his mayoralty as she intended, by those who resented his steadfast and honourable defence of public liberty : though, had her Majesty known it, it was a reason why she should have done honour to a mayoralty held by one whose services reflected distinction on her reign.

One of my earliest friends in Birmingham was John Collins, a Birmingham local preacher, whose hand I held as a boy when we walked together to Harborne, a village four miles from Birmingham, where he went to preach on a Sunday, and I to teach in the Sunday School the little I knew. He was imprisoned one year in Warwick Gaol for making speeches on behalf of Chartism.

Another friend of mine, at whose grave I afterwards spoke, was William Lovett. He was imprisoned also one year at the same time as Collins, and in the same gaol. They were both what was known in their days as "Moral Force" Chartists, in contradistinction to "Physical Force" agitators. In those days there was only a middle-class suffrage, composed (as W. J. Fox said in the House of Commons) of the "Worshipful Company of Ten-pound Householders." Moral force was before its time then. Now the people have a free vote, a free platform, a free press, and the ballot-box—if they cannot get what they want without physical force, they do not understand their business. Lovett and Collins composed in prison, and afterwards published, a well-thought-out scheme for the political education of working-class politicians. Collins, like Attwood, Salt, and O'Connor, died from failure of mental power. It was a justification of those who sought redress by violence that, avoiding it and advocating moral force alone, they should be condemned to imprisonment all the same.

"Thomas Cooper, the Chartist," as he proudly wrote on the title-page of his remarkable poem "The Purgatory of Suicides," was imprisoned two years in Stafford Gaol. During fifty years over which our friendship has extended, there has been change of conviction in him, but never of honest principle. Mr. Cooper, likeminded, exceeded Lovett and Collins in the political instruction of the people, and had himself a passion for self-education which has made his name eminent by his attainments. His name is in all booksellers' catalogues, and his praise is in all the

churches. Poems, novels, essays, sermons, are departments of literature in which he has been distinguished.

Henry Vincent appeared among us in John Frost's days. I have the sword which Frost wore when he commenced his ill-fated insurrection in Newport. It was taken from him by Colonel Napier. Vincent was an ardent, inflammatory orator, who said as much against Christianity as against political oppression. All the while he was a Christian at heart, and, like Thomas Cooper, a greater advocate than he was a heretic—being a heretic from indignation rather than from intellectual conviction. Vincent's imprisonment was in Monmouth Gaol. He afterwards was an occasional preacher in Liberal Dissenting churches, but, like all men who have been for a time on the other side, he never returned again to the dark valley of unseeing faith, but dwelt on the hills of orthodoxy, where some light of reason falls. He ultimately acquired a cultivated style of oratory, and became a celebrated lecturer both in England and America. His orations, for the quality of his speeches entitled them to that term, were mainly expositions of political principles. He married, as has been said, the daughter of John Cleave.

Ernest Jones was notable alike for impassioned oratory and poetic inspiration. By birth, culture, and sacrifice, he lent distinction to the Chartist cause he espoused. Thomas Carlyle went to see him through the bars of the prison where he was confined two years. We never knew whether Jones was Hanoverian or English by birth, but he was always English in his advocacy and sympathies. Carlyle had no discernment that he was a man of genius who had resigned affluent prospects for penury and principles, and who, in great vicissitude, never turned back. The only time I ever spoke on Nelson's Monument in Trafalgar Square was in commemoration of his premature death.

Joseph Rayner Stephens, the greatest orator on the Chartist side, was imprisoned in York Castle. Stephens was a Tory, not of the baser sort who seek personal power for purposes of political supremacy, but of the nobler kind who desire to see power in the hands of the wise (which they take themselves to be) for the improvement of the condition and the better contentment of the people. Stephens was for the Crown, but he was for the people, come what might of the Crown.

On the platform he was a master of assemblies. In conversation he excelled all men I have known. He saw all that was in the words he used and all round the subject upon which he spoke. His easy precision resembled that of Lord Westbury. Stephens did vehemently teach armed resistance, not against public order, but against public wrong. The Government did not see the distinction—no wonder the people did not.

I had but limited acquaintanceship with Richard Oastler, although great admiration for his personal character. In spite of his Toryism, I had a regard for him, on account of his humanity and real interest in the welfare of factory children. I first knew him when visiting George White at Queen's Bench Prison, where Mr. Oastler was also confined. Like Joseph Rayner Stephens, his great colleague, he cared for throne and factory children, but for children first and children most.

William Prouting Roberts, whom we called the "Miners' Attorney-General," was one who incurred six months' imprisonment at Devizes for his defence of labour. He was the terror of many a local Bench, and defended many a miner and weaver who otherwise had had no redress or deliverance.

The most volcanic voice in the Chartist movement was that of G. J. Mantle. When I was with Mr. J. S. Mill at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, in the Hyde-Park-railing days, Mill could not be heard far into the vast valley of people there assembled; the outer concourse was lost in the deep shadows of the great hall which two fierce lights on the platform deepened. Then Mantle was chosen to read the resolutions to be passed. His sentences seemed shot from a culverin. His throat opened like the mouth of a tunnel. No doubt the jury heard his defence long before (1839-40), when he was accorded two years' imprisonment for speeches made to Hyde Park Chartists. The judge embellished his sentence by a few graceful words (common among judges, who are never political), saying—"It was you who made seditious speeches, and were a party to the conspiracy and riot. It is true you were not at the latter in body, but your spirit was there; you sounded the trumpet, but you were not in the van, and it is always so with people like you. You are a young man with a very voluble tongue and an empty head, as most mob orators are. I advise you to study more and speak less—to know, if you can be made

to know, that a boy of twenty-two is not the person to alter the constitution of this country."

George Julian Harney was early in prison. He was in the heart of the Chartist movement, and always a picturesque figure in it. His fervour of speech and his ubiquitous activity made him widely known and popular. It was long hoped he would be the historian of the movement, of which he knew more than any other leader. His first wife, who died early, came from Mauchline. She was tall, beautiful, and of high spirit, a brave counsellor in all risks and a resolute sharer of any consequences. Harney was worthy of the heroic companionship it was his good fortune to possess. His last publication in England was the *Red Republican*, a title which admitted of no mistake, and he was the first Chartist who adopted Louis Blanc's motto—"The Republic, Democratic and Social."

James, afterwards Alderman, Williams, of Sunderland, was a bookseller, printer, and publicist, and one of the few Chartist agitators in those ardent days who thought that political passion was the better for being controlled by good sense. At Durham Assizes he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He defended himself. The jury had recommended leniency on the ground of his being a young man. Williams said he claimed no consideration on that ground, as what he had done was the result of calm deliberation. He only claimed consideration on the ground of the utility of his public conduct. Williams was counted too intellectual in his advocacy, and fell below the level of orators of passion; but at the bar he was in respect of courage far above most of the men of passion, who, like O'Connor and some others, denied what they had said.

Irish leaders of English political agitation were daring, eloquent, inspiring, impetuous, and dangerous—dangerous because they were impatient, and impatient here because, despairing in their own land, they naturally incited insurgency here which might lead to liberty in Ireland.

Feargus O'Connor, a man more powerfully built than O'Connell, whom he succeeded as a political advocate in England, was imprisoned for two years in York Castle. O'Connor was the most impetuous and most patient of all the tribunes who ever led the English Chartists. In the *Northern Star* he let every rival speak, and had the grand strength of indifference to

what any one said against him in his own columns. Logic was not his strong point, and he had colossal incoherence.

Thomas Ainge Devyr, an energetic and fertile Irish leader of English Chartism, would have been imprisoned a long time by Lord Abinger had he not fled to America. His bail was estreated in his absence. He was the earliest of the advocates of land and landlord reform in Ireland, and claimed, with some truth, to be the originator of the land theories that afterwards became famous. The *Northern Liberator*, edited by him before his flight from Newcastle-on-Tyne to America, was the most readable of all the insurgent newspapers of that period.

James Bronterre O'Brien, who excelled all the Chartist leaders in passion of speech and invective, was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment at the Liverpool Assizes. He was the only Chartist who comprehended fully how large a share, social, financial, and commercial, error contributes to the suffering of the people.

For George White I had as much regard as for any Irish leader among the Chartists. He was so frank, generous, and brave. Whenever the early Socialists were in trouble with their theological adversaries, White would bring up his "Old Guard" and man the hall during a debate to see fair play. In one case in Birmingham they attended five nights, at Beardsworth Repository, from seven to eleven o'clock. Though poor men, they paid for their own admission. He said to me that whenever I was in any danger of ill-usage on the platform I was to send him word and he would bring up the "Old Guard." This he never failed to do. When he was imprisoned in London, my wife used to make pies for him and take them to him at the Queen's Bench. They were very welcome to him, as he always had a precarious revenue. He died ultimately in the Infirmary in Sheffield, I have no doubt dreaming of pies to come, for he was very desolate. He was the personification of energy, physical and mental, possessing a vigorous frame and bright eyes, with a ready, trenchant speech which had the prance of the war-horse in it, neighing for battle. Like other Chartists, he took money from the Tories, the better to enable him to destroy the Whigs, whom he distrusted—because they went tardily on the way of redress. He opposed the Whigs more than he did the Tories, who never set out

that way at all. The father of Lord Cranbrook (it was said by Bradford colleagues), partly from kindness to White, and otherwise for his political services, allowed him many years a small stipend—besides special aid when Anti-Corn Law League meetings required to be broken up.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### *A FURTHER CALENDAR OF FRIENDS WHOSE FATE NEEDS EXPLANATION.*

(1840-1890.)

AMONG the following inhabitants of the prison-house are valued friends and colleagues of my own. Others I knew and had certain relations with, but without approving or condoning what they had done. One whom I was bound by ties of friendship to save if I could, sent me a petition to sign, as I was known to the Minister to whom it was addressed. But I declined, as the plea drawn up by the petitioner justified his act. I did not agree with the justification, and could not ask a minister to condone an offence which a jury had recognized as harmful to the secular interests of the public. At the same time I drew up another petition asking for mitigation of sentence on other grounds which could fairly be pleaded.

Mr. Charles Southwell had been out with Sir de Lacy Evans in the Spanish expedition. He was imprisoned in 1840 for twelve months, in Bristol Gaol, for an article in the *Oracle of Reason*, entitled the "Jew Book." He was sentenced by Sir Charles Wetherell, the "Old Bags" of Hone. I took the vacant editorship and came to a similar end. Mr. Southwell was the youngest of thirty-six children, and was the liveliest of them all. In this he resembled Bishop Bathurst, who was one of thirty-six children by the same father; but Charles Southwell resembled the bishop in no other particular. Mr. Southwell was for some time upon the stage, and was a good actor. He was, like myself, a social missionary lecturing upon Mr. Owen's system of society. He had great versatility—infinite animation, chivalry, and daring. When Bishop Philpotts

intimidated two social missionaries into taking the oath as licensed preachers to avoid certain disabilities, I and Charles Southwell protested against and refused to swear to the thing which was not. On one occasion he undertook to deliver a lecture for the benefit of prisoners in Edinburgh, in the interests of the Anti-Persecution Union. He did lecture, and for an hour and a half a large audience was delighted with his wit, vivacity, and discursiveness. At the conclusion of his address, I said, "Why, Southwell, you never mentioned the subject of your lecture!" He answered, "Well, I quite forgot it." So did we all while he was speaking. He died in Auckland, New Zealand; but though he had ceased to advocate his principles, he maintained them in his death.

George Adams was imprisoned in Gloucester Gaol for publishing the *Oracle of Reason* from friendship for me. Mrs. Harriet Adams, his wife, was also imprisoned for like cause. She was handsome, intelligent, and of invincible spirit. Both died at Watertown, in America.

Miss Matilda Roalfe, at a time when persecution in Edinburgh prevailed, went from London to conduct a small publishing business, though the previous owner of the shop was imprisoned. She also was sentenced to be imprisoned sixty days (1843) for the publication of prohibited Freethought works. She was confined in an unclean cell, and her life was imperilled by religious tumult on her release on bail. On her trial she cross-examined the witness with good judgment. She was told that if she pleaded she was unaware of the nature of the books she sold she might escape. This she would not do. She was instructed by her legal friends that there were serious legal flaws in the proceedings against her. She declined to seek escape on technical grounds, but stood on the right of freedom of the press in honest criticism and speculation. She was as remarkable for quiet courage as for good sense. She made no complaint and no submission. She afterwards became the wife of a valued friend of mine, who, next to my brother Austin, was my most trusted assistant at the Fleet Street house.

Mrs. Emma Martin was another lady distinguished in her day as a platform speaker on questions of social reform, at whose grave I spoke. She suffered brief imprisonments. She was a handsome woman, of brilliant talent and courage.

Thomas Finlay was a man of sixty years of age when I first knew him. He was of good presence, intelligence, and devotion to principle. He made a case with a glass frame and placed in it a copy of the Bible in large type, open at a part which he thought unfit to be found in a sacred book, and placed it where it could be read by passers-by in a main street in Edinburgh. For this he was imprisoned and the Bible also. I have the copy which was sent to me, bearing the imprimatur of the Procurator-Fiscal certifying its legal detention for blasphemy. Finlay defended himself in a speech of considerable length, but was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He had a daughter married to Mr. Henry Robinson, of Edinburgh, who was agent for works I published. He also was imprisoned by the Edinburgh authorities.

Thomas Pooley, the Cornish well-sinker, whom I aided in rescuing from twenty-one months' imprisonment, was an honest, indomitable, incoherent man, whose career the reader may see described in another chapter.

Thomas Paterson was a young Scotchman who also went out with Sir de Lacy Evans in the Spanish expedition, to which Southwell also belonged, but they were unknown to each other at that time. They were afterwards colleagues in the defence of free opinion and underwent similar imprisonment. Paterson's chief imprisonment was in Scotland, where he went as a volunteer during the Edinburgh prosecutions, being imprisoned fifteen months in 1843. While I was a stationed lecturer in Sheffield he lived in my house nine months, and was known as my "curate," as I engaged him to assist me in the schools conducted in connection with my lectureship at the Rockingham Street Hall. No danger and no imprisonment intimidated Paterson. In any project of peril in which I was concerned, he was always a volunteer. For this reason I remained his friend until his death, which brought me trouble, as Paterson published attacks on friends of mine from which I entirely dissented. This he did without my knowing it, but as my friendliness with him was known, I was considered as concurring in his opinion, and thus I lost friends.

Mr. G. W. Foote was imprisoned for publishing Biblical caricatures not worse than the caricatures which theological adversaries deal in without reproach, and, indeed, with popular

approval. Mr. Ramsey, an intelligent and hard-working propagandist, was imprisoned in like manner for selling them. I did what I could to induce Sir Wm. Harcourt to release them on the grounds that, were they chargeable with misplaced ridicule, the consequences fell upon their cause, and it was no business of the State to protect Freethinkers from the excess of their own enthusiasm, and that, since Christians were allowed unbridled license to ridicule their adversaries, and did it, both parties should be imprisoned, or neither.

The most unjust of all prosecutions of the kind was that of Edward Truelove, a man not only of blameless, but honourable life, who had been a bookseller and publisher for nearly half a century. He was imprisoned four months for selling Robert Dale Owen's little work on "Physiology in Relation to Morals"—the most ascetic, reasonably-written of all pamphlets on the limitation of families that have been published for forty years. The sensuality is all on the side of those who object to the principle of such works. Mr. Truelove, though of advanced age, bravely refused to compromise the right of free publication of opinion, and sustained the traditions of the school of Carlile, Watson, and Hetherington.

Mr. J. B. Langley was a publicist with whom I was associated for more than thirty years. He had the passion of public service, and, like all who have it, he neglected his own interest to advance it. He was imprisoned for the violation of an Act never put in force before, and which, if honestly put in operation, would imprison hundreds of persons in the city of London who are counted of good commercial fame, and who would share the same fate. Mr. John Bright and Mr. Samuel Morley contributed to a fund to enable Mr. Langley to go to the coast for a time when free, he having many friends who knew how a forlorn hope or struggling cause could always command his services day or night, near or far. Indeed, it had been better for him had he given more time to his own business and less to the public cause. Mr. Langley was one of the minor poets, as well as a ready public speaker.

Mr. Swindlehurst, a very hard worker for social improvement, was imprisoned in like manner from a like cause.

Robert Southey, who was hanged at Maidstone, was not one of my friends, but I was an adviser of his, and endeavoured to

assist him. He killed seven persons, and was very deservedly executed. I have known many who earned the gallows in their effort to obtain notoriety, but Southey was the only one who chose it for that purpose.

Gerald Supple, named elsewhere, a journalistic colleague, was sentenced to be hanged for shooting two persons and killing the wrong one. He had ability, chivalry, and courage worthy of his country. He came from Dublin.

Rudolph Herzel was a tall, thoughtful-looking secretary to a Secular Society at Leeds. Ardent, intelligent, enthusiastic, devoted, always ready to go to the front, he offered himself to me to serve on any forlorn hope, in conspiracy or battle. I declined to dispose of any man's life, and did no more on his request than inform him where conflict was impending, but the choice of entering upon it must be his own. He afterwards went out during the Italian war, and was no more heard of by me.

One whom I do not name, but who had many claims on my regard, got involved in the unwise defence of some persons, unknown to me, in serious railway robberies. I have no doubt he acted from some mistaken sense of justice, and wrote a letter intimidatory of the authorities who were investigating the robberies, with which he could not possibly have been concerned. One morning I saw in *The Times* a lithographed letter with an offer of £300 reward for discovery of the writer. I knew at a glance who he was and remonstrated with him. He wrote, with a fearless defiance natural to him, saying, he knew I needed money, and that I was quite at liberty to give information as to the authorship of the letter, and he not only should not reproach me, but be glad if he could be of service to me. My answer was that I never took blood-money, especially that of one I had treated as a friend. He was imprisoned several times subsequently, but never on that or any similar account, and sometimes from causes creditable to him. A curious thing occurred in connection with the letter referred to. Having to go to Scotland I took his self-inculpating letter and a copy of *The Times* containing the lithograph letter with me, intending to give both to him. I never removed them from my trunk. Some days after my arrival at my destination I sought them, but they, alas! were not there. In what way they could have been abstracted or lost I never could make out. My anxiety

lest they had fallen into dangerous hands was very great. What became of them I never knew. Fortunately nothing resulted from their loss.

Now, I have fulfilled my promise to justify my assertion that I have had so many questionable friends that the reader might feel reasonable alarm at continuing the perusal of these pages. In this and the two preceding chapters I have enumerated sixty-eight persons in whom the State took personal interest. In enumerating those who were hanged, I have said nothing of others who, in the opinion of confident, if not competent observers, ought to have ended that way. But every man who had knowledge of public affairs knows a great number of these also. I have confined myself, with one or two exceptions, to those who nobly incurred peril. In my memory are many more whom, perhaps, I ought to mention ; but I have cited enough to prove my intimation that I am a person of suspicious acquaintances. But it is a good rule in autobiography, as in debate, to state your case, clear your case, prove your case, and then cease. To do more is to weary the reader, and that is the prime crime a writer can commit.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### *THE FOUNDER OF SOCIAL IDEAS IN ENGLAND.*

(1841-1858.)

HAVING been for more than half a century concerned in the advocacy of Robert Owen's "New Views of Society," which attracted a band of adherents when first announced, I think it is relevant that I should give some account of this class of social ideas.

Just as Thomas Paine was the founder of political ideas among the people of England, Robert Owen was also the founder of social ideas among them. He who first conceives a new idea has merit and distinction ; but he is the founder of it who puts it into the minds of men by proving its practicability. Mr. Owen did this at New Lanark, and convinced numerous persons that the improvement of society was possible by wise material means. There were social ideas in England before the days of Owen, as there were political ideas before the days of Paine ; but Owen gave social ideas form and force. His passion was the organization of labour, and to cover the land with self-supporting cities of industry, in which well-devised material condition should render ethical life possible, in which labour should be, as far as possible, done by machinery, and education, recreation, and competence should be enjoyed by all. Instead of communities working for the world, they should work for themselves, and keep in their own hands the fruit of their labour ; and commerce should be an exchange of surplus wealth, and not a necessity of existence. All this Owen believed to be practicable. At New Lanark he virtually or indirectly supplied to his workpeople, with splendid munificence and practical

judgment, all the conditions which gave dignity to labour. Excepting by Godin of Guise, no workmen have ever been so well treated, instructed, and cared for as at New Lanark.

Co-operation as a form of social amelioration and of profit existed in an intermittent way before New Lanark ; but it was the advantages of the stores Owen incited that was the beginning of working-class co-operation. His followers intended the store to be a means of raising the industrious class, but many think of it now merely as a means of serving themselves. Still, the nobler portion are true to the earlier ideal of dividing profits in store and workshop, of rendering the members self-helping, intelligent, honest, and generous, and abating, if not superseding competition and meanness.

During all the discussions upon Mr. Owen's views, I do not remember notice being taken of Thomas Holcroft, the actor, who might have been cited as a precursor of Mr. Owen. Holcroft, mostly self-taught, familiar with hardship, vicissitude, and adventure, became an author, actor, and playwright of distinction. He expressed views of remarkable similarity to those of Owen. Holcroft was a friend of political and moral improvement, but he wished it to be gradual and rational, because he believed no other could be effectual. He deplored all provocation and invective. All that he wished was the free and dispassionate discussion of the great principles relating to human happiness, trusting to the power of reason to make itself heard, not doubting the result. He believed the truth had a natural superiority over error, if truth could only be stated ; that if once discovered it must, being left to itself, soon spread and triumph. "Men," he said, "do not become what by nature they are meant to be, but what society makes them."

Actors, apart from their profession, are mostly idealess ; and the few who are capable of interest in human affairs outside the stage, are mostly so timid of their popularity that they are acquiescent, often subservient, to conventional ideas. Not so Holcroft. When it was dangerous to have independent theological or social opinions, he was as bold as Owen at a later day. He did not conceal that he was a Necessarian. He was one of a few moralists who took a chapel in Margaret Street, Cavendish Square, with a view to found an Ethical Church. One of his sayings was this : "The only enemy I encounter is error, and

that with no weapon but words. My constant theme has been, 'Let error be taught, not whipped.'" Owen but put this philosophy into a system, and based public agitation upon the Holcroft principle. Owen's habit of mind and principle are there expressed. Lord Brougham, in his famous address to the Glasgow University in 1825, declared the same principle when he said no man was any more answerable for his belief than for the height of his stature or the colour of his hair. Brougham, being a life-long friend of Owen, had often heard this from him. Holcroft was born 1745, died 1809.

Robert Owen was a remarkable instance of a man at once Tory and revolutionary. He held with the government of the few, but, being a philanthropist, he meant that the government of the few should be the government of the good. It cannot be said that he, like Burke, was incapable of conceiving the existence of good social arrangements apart from kings and courts. It may be said that he never thought upon the subject. He found power in their hands, and he went to them to exercise it in the interests of his "system." He was conservative as respected their power, but conservative of nothing else. He would revolutionize both religion and society—indeed, clear the world out of the way—to make room for his "new views." He visited the chief courts of Europe. Because nothing immediately came of it, it was said he was not believed in. But there is evidence that he was believed in. He was listened to because he proposed that crowned heads should introduce his system into their states, urging that it would ensure contentment and material comfort among their people, and by giving rulers the control and patronage of social life, would secure them in their dignity.

Owen's fine temper was owing to his principle. He always thought of the unseen chain which links every man to his destiny. His fine manners were owing to natural self-possession and to his observation. When a youth behind Mr. McGuffog's counter at Stamford, the chief draper's shop in the town, he "watched the manners and studied the characters of the nobility when they were under the least restraint." It never fell to me to entertain many eminent men, even by accident; but the first was Robert Owen. His object was to meet a professor and some young students at the London University.

Two of them were Mr. Percy Greg and Mr. Michael Foster, both of whom afterwards became eminent. There were some publicists present, and Mr. W. J. Birch, author of the "Philosophy and Religion of Shakspeare," all good conversationalists. Mr. Owen was the best talker of the party. Perhaps it was that they deferred to him, or submitted to him, because of his age and public career; but he displayed more variety and vivacity than they. He spoke naturally as one who had authority. But his courtesy was never suspended by his earnestness. Owen, being a Welshman, had all the fervour and pertinacity, without the impetuosity of his race. Though he had made his own fortune by insight and energy, his fine manners came by instinct. He was successively a draper's counterman, a clerk, a manager, a trader and manufacturer; but he kept himself free from the hurry and unrest of manner which the eagerness of gain and the solicitude of loss, impart to the commercial class, and which mark the difference between their manners and those of gentlemen. There are both sorts in the House of Commons. As a rule, you know on sight the members who have made their own fortunes. If you accost them, they are apt to start as though they were arrested. An interview is an encroachment. They do not conceal that they are thinking of their time as they answer you. They look at their minutes as though they were loans, and only part with them if they are likely to bear interest. There are business men in Parliament who are born with the instinct of progress without hurry. But they are the exception.

A gentleman has no master, and is neither driven nor hurried as though he had some one to obey. Mr. Owen had this charm of repose. He had a clear and abiding conception that men had no substantial interest in being base; and that when they were base, it was an intrinsic misfortune arising from inherited tendency, or acquired from contact with untoward circumstances. This belief made him patient with dishonesty; but dishonesty never blinded him nor imposed upon him. He could see as far into a rogue as any man. His theory of the influences of heredity and circumstances gave him a key to character. Miss Martineau had frequent visits from Mr. Owen, who, she said, "always interested her by his candour and cheerfulness. His benevolence and charming manners would make him the most

popular man in England if he could but distinguish between assertion and argument, and refrain from wearying his friends with his monotonous doctrine." It is a peculiarity in some Welshmen that, if refuted in argument and they admit the refutation to be conclusive, their previous conviction returns to them, and they reassert it as though it had never been answered. I observed this in Welshmen in America, where there is no market for abandoned ideas, and no time for returning to errors. Mr. Owen had this recurrency of anterior ideas, but in him it seemed earnestness rather than mere iteration. Besides, it was consistency in him, seeing that he never thought confutation of his views possible, and never met with it.

Because he insisted on these far-reaching principles, which were sufficient to recast the social policy of the nation, he was described disparagingly as "a man of one idea." I never shared this objection to persons of one idea, having known so many who had none. Many people have but fragments of ideas, and no complete conception of any.

Mr. Owen's fault was that he repeated his great idea in the same words. It is variety of statement of the same thing—if there be truth in it—which conquers conviction.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### *FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PHILOSOPHER OF NEW LANARK.*

(1841-1858.)

MR. OWEN's sense of fame lay in his ideas. They formed a world in which he dwelt, and he thought others who saw them would be as enchanted as he was. But others did not see them, and he took no adequate means to enable them to see them. James Mill and Francis Place revised his famous "Essays on the Formation of Character," of which he sent a copy to the first Napoleon. Mr. Owen published nothing else so striking or vigorous. Yet he could speak on the platform impressively and with a dignity and force which commanded the admiration of cultivated adversaries.

Like Turner, Owen had an earlier and a later manner. His memoirs—never completed—were written apparently when Robert Fulton's death was recent. They have incident, historic surprises, and the charm of genuine autobiography ; but when he wrote of his principles, he lacked altogether Cobbett's faculty of "talking with the pen," which is the source of literary engagingness. It was said of Montaigne that "his sentences were vascular and alive, and if you pricked them they bled." If you pricked Mr. Owen's, when he wrote on his "System," you lost your needle in the wool. He had the altruistic fervour as strongly as Comte, but Owen was without the artistic instinct of style, which sees an inapt word as a false tint in a picture or as an error in drawing.

His "Lectures on Marriage" he permitted to be printed in a note-taker's unskilful terms, and did not correct them, which

subjected him and his adherents also to misapprehension. Everybody knows that love must always be free, and, if left to take its own course, is generally ready to accept the responsibility of its choice. People will put up with the ills they bring upon themselves, but will resent happiness proposed by others; just as a nation will be more content with the bad government of their own contriving than they will be under better laws imposed upon them by foreigners. Polygamous relations are inconsistent with delicacy or refinement. Miscellaneousness and love are incompatible terms. Love is an absolute preference. Mr. Owen regarded affection as essential to chastity; but his deprecation of priestly marriages set many against marriage itself. This was owing more to the newness of his doctrine in those days, which led to misconception on the part of some, and was wilfully perverted by others. He claimed for the poor facilities of divorce equal to those accorded to the rich. To some extent this has been conceded by law, which has tended to increase marriage by rendering it less a terror. The new liberty produced license, as all new liberty does; yet the license is not chargeable upon the liberty, nor upon those who advocated it: but upon the reaction from unlimited bondage.

Owen's philanthropy was owing to his principles. Whether wealth is acquired by chance or fraud—as a good deal of wealth is—or owing to inheritance without merit, or to greater capacity than other men have, it is alike the gift of destiny, and Mr. Owen held that those less fortunate should be assisted to improvement in their condition by the favourites of fate. Seeing that every man would be better than he is were his condition in life devised for his betterment, Owen's advice was not to hate men, but to change the system which makes them what they are or keeps them from moral advancement. For these reasons he was against all attempts at improvement by violence. Force was not reformation. In his mind reason and better social arrangements were the only remedy.

In the autumn of 1845 I sent to Mr. Owen (he being then in America) a copy of my first book on his social philosophy, and the method of stating it on the platform. It was entitled "Rationalism," treated from an Individualist point of view. Mr. Owen's party were then known as "Rational Religionists." Solicitous of the opinion of the master, I asked him, in case he

approved of it, to please to tell me so, and permit me to say so. In 1848, he being again in England, I sent him a further copy, as possibly the other never reached him. He kindly answered as follows :—

“ COX'S HOTEL, JERMYN STREET,

“ *March* 18, 1848.

“ MY DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for your note, papers, and book, which came here last night only, although your note is dated 3rd inst. I am just now overwhelmed with most important public business, which will more than occupy every moment of my time until I return from Paris. As soon as I shall have leisure for both reading and study, I will attend to your ‘Rationalism,’ and give my opinion of it.

“ Yours, my dear sir,

“ Very truly and affectionately,

“ ROBT. OWEN.

“ P.S.—Keep up the type of the first 500 copies ” [alluding to a work I was printing for him].

Always intent on the diffusion of his views, I conclude he never found time to give me the opinion I sought.

In another letter he had told me that Mr. Cobden had presented to Parliament a petition from him. I do not possess any letter in which he referred to the opinion he promised to give me ; but I inferred from his continued friendship that he did not much dissent from what I had said in “Rationalism,” or he would have made time to do so ; for when, in a proof of an article I had sent him (he contributed several to the *Reasoner* I was then editing), his sharp eye detected the words “misery, producing circumstances,” he desired me to tell the printer to remove the comma and put a hyphen in its place, that it might read “misery-producing circumstances.” On one occasion he held £10 scrip in the Fleet Street house.

In 1847, Mr. Owen was a candidate for the representation of Marylebone. The principles he offered to advocate are notable to-day, as showing how well he understood the political needs of the nation, and how much he was in advance of his times :—

1. A graduated property tax equal to the national expenditure.

2. The abolition of all other taxes.
3. No taxation without representation.
4. Free trade with all the world.
5. National education for all who desire it.
6. National beneficial employment for all who require it.
7. Full and complete freedom of religion under every name by which men may call themselves.
8. A national circulating medium, under the supervision and control of Parliament, that could be increased or diminished as wealth for circulation increased or diminished ; and that should be, by its ample security, unchangeable in its value.
9. National military training for all male children in schools, that the country may be protected against foreign invasion, without the present heavy permanent military expenditure.

Mr. Owen was afterwards a candidate for the City of London. I, being a freeman, was one of his nominators, and attended at the Guildhall, at his request, to propose or second him on the day of election.

For many weeks I published an advertisement of the commencement of the Millennium in 1855. This I continued at his request until March 25th. But up to quarter day no sign of it appeared. I received payment for the advertisement in the *Reasoner*, which, had I believed the Millennium was so near, I should not have taken.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### *THE OWEN FAMILY.*

MR. OWEN had three sons who had distinction in their day. One was employed by the United States Government on geological survey of territories, another fought in the war of the Rebellion, and died by injudiciously tasting embalming water, brought to him for analysis. Robert Dale, his eldest son, came to be United States Minister at Naples, and delighted King Bomba with spiritual *séances* until Garibaldi swept the tyrant and the spirits away. The minister's daughter Rosamond became Mrs. Oliphant—a bright young lady who wrote a singularly wise pamphlet on the Rights of Women.

American papers, who best knew the facts concerning Robert Dale Owen, explained that for a period before his death he suffered from excitement of the brain, ascribed to overwork in his youth. He was, from his youth upward, a man of absolute moral courage, and to the end of his days he maintained the reputation of it. As soon as he was deceived by the Spiritist, Katie King, he published a card and said so, and warned people not to believe what he had said about that fascinating impostor. A man of less courage would have said nothing, in the hope that the public would the sooner forget it. It is clear now, that spiritism did not affect his mind; his mind was affected before he presented gold rings to feminine spirits. Towards the end of his days he fancied himself the Marquis of Breadalbane, and proposed coming over to Scotland to take possession of his estates. He had a great scheme for recasting the art of war by raising armies of gentlemen only, and proposed himself to go to the then raging East and settle things there on a very superior plan. He believed himself in posses-

sion of extraordinary powers of riding and fighting, and had a number of amusing illusions. But he was not a common madman ; he was mad like a philosopher—he had a picturesque insanity. After he had charmed his friends by his odd speculations, he would spend a few days in analyzing them, and wondering how they arose in his mind. He very coolly and skilfully dissected his own crazes. The activity of the brain had become at times incontrollable ; still his was a very superior kind of aberration. In politics, Robert Dale Owen was not a force so much as an ornament, and never fulfilled the promise of his youth in being a leader of men. In his Freethought writings he excelled all his contemporaries in finish of expression.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### *THE MYSTERIOUS PARCEL LEFT AT THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN" OFFICE.*

(1841.)

WHEN a book was issued some years ago in London, in defence of small families, it bore a disagreeable title, and I suggested to the author that "Elements of Social Science" would be a better one, which he adopted. Afterwards Prof. Newman pointed out in his discerning way, in letters to the *Reasoner*, that the author's doctrine included a principle which would lead to evil : as it implied that seduction might be a physiological necessity. The merciful aim of the work was so far frustrated by its execution. To any similar work the objection made by me related solely to its expression. This I made clear in the book "John Stuart Mill, as the Working Classes knew him." On a question such as family limitation, delicacy of phrase and purity of taste are everything. They are themselves safeguards of morality. Foolishness of thought, coarseness of illustration, deter from acts of the highest prudence and repel instead of attracting serious attention.

Nations, as well as persons, are on some subjects comparatively without the sense of taste. Joseph Barker, whom many readers know, was entirely deficient in it. In his first book, "Memoirs of a Man," he gave incredible and unquotable instances of it, and elsewhere also. Americans, as a rule, are far less reticent on domestic questions than Englishmen. Scotland is notable in the same way ; I have heard at public assemblies there things said before a mixed audience, by educated persons, which no class in England could anywhere

be found to utter. We have reservation it is not well to disregard, since it is a sentiment of civilization, and means moral refinement. It was from Scotland this subject first came into England. In these days of Board schools and science lectures, physiology can be explained to girls, whatever they need to know, by lady physicians. Youths should be taught by a medical professor in the same way ; and no course of education should be considered complete until a series of select class lectures had been given, so that domestic knowledge should be insured of all that can affect, for good or evil, the future of the human race.

In 1874-5, I was engaged in writing the "History of Co-operation in England," when I became acquainted with a curious episode in the career of the founder of that system.

Robert Owen, finding the world in manifest disorder, suggested how it might be put straight. Looking at it with an intelligent and benevolent eye, he saw that crime was error, and that misery was crime—in other words, that misery was preventable, and that it was a crime in rulers to permit it. He was the first publicist amongst us who looked with royal eyes upon children. He regarded grown persons as proprietors of the world, bound to extend the rights of hospitality to all visitors. He considered little children as little guests, to be welcomed with gentle courtesy and tenderness, to be offered knowledge and love, and charmed with song and flowers, so that they might be glad, and proud that they had come into a world which gave them happiness and only asked from them goodness.

Mr. Owen began his career as a reformer—in what we regard now as the pre-scientific period—before men measured progress by single steps. As Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar expressed it with admirable comprehensiveness—"Mr. Owen looked to nothing less than to renovate the world, to extirpate all evil, to banish all punishment, to create like views and like wants, to guard against all conflicts and hostilities." There is grandeur in this wide horizon of social effort, which will always have inspiration in it. Finding pious benevolence, seeking progress by prayer—which did not bring it—Mr. Owen boldly proposed to substitute for it scientific benevolence, which seeks human improvement by material methods. "Here," he said, if not in

terms, in theory, "is the new path of deliverance, where no thought is lost, no effort vain ; where the victory is always to the wise and the patient, and the poor who are wise will no longer be betrayed."

We know not now what courage it required to say this. When Mr. Owen said it, gentlemen expected to provide the poor with their religion. If they subscribed to any school, this was the chief object they had in view ; for it was very little secular learning they imparted. In Sunday schools, spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic were given in homœopathic doses, and they were generally subordinated to the Catechism. Mr. Owen gave lessons in the knowledge of the world in his schools, and justified their being given. Both the clergy and dissenting ministers regarded with jealousy any influence arising not under their direction, and they made it difficult for social improvers to do anything. They gave bad accounts of any working men who allied themselves to social schemes, so that inquirers were intimidated. It was a great merit of Mr. Owen that he did more to resent this, and inspire others to deliver society from it, than any other man of wealth in his time.

In those alarmed days, when politicians and capitalists were as terrified as shopkeepers at the progress of co-operation, Mr. Owen, not content with spreading disquiet among the clergy, threw a new alarm into the midst of conventional conservatism, which has strangely passed out of the sight of history. Mr. James Mill had written in the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*" that it was both desirable and possible to limit the families of the poor. He held the opinion that it ought to be done, and that the poor should see to it. He despised working people who crowded the labour market with their offspring, and then complained of the lowness of wages and want in their homes, where there were more hungry mouths than food.

Certainly man or woman entering the office of a parish overseer to be questioned with suspicion, relieved with reluctance, treated as a burden on the parish, and advised to emigrate (as the shopkeeper naturally begrudges the flesh on their bones which he has to pay for), is a humiliating business, so shocking and deplorable that those who come to this state had better never have been born. Any legitimate remedy which the wit of man could devise would seem purity and

dignity by the side of this degradation. Those who undertook to make communities soon found that the inmates would come to certain ruin if overrun with children, and they listened to James Mill's warning, and not his alone. The *Edinburgh Review* was quite as emphatic and more explicit to the same end than the "Encyclopædia." Mr. Owen, who always gave heed to the philosophers, circulated papers addressed "To the married of the working people," warning them of their danger. His courage and thoroughness was wonderful. No man had a better right than he to invent the maxim he was fond of using, "Truth without mystery, mixture of error, or fear of man." He was not better able, peradventure, than other men to obtain truth free from error ; but he was beyond question as free from fear of man in moral things as any publicist who ever lived. It was stated in the *Black Dwarf*, by several correspondents, that this was so. Mr. Richard Carlile wrote a letter from Dorchester Gaol, which was published, stating that if Mr. Owen was written to "he would proudly admit to any one" that families should be manageable. Mr. Jonathan Wooler, the editor, treated the statement as a fact.

The *Black Dwarf* stated that "Mr. Owen had become a convert to Mr. Malthus's views as to the danger of population, and had been to France to learn in what way French families were limited. He consulted the most eminent physicians of France upon the subject, as he was alarmed at the result of large families in communities." He made known the result of his inquiries in 1822. The following year, a packet of papers upon this subject was sent to No. 5, Water Lane, Fleet Street, London, where Mr. Richard Carlile then had a shop, with a request that he would forward it as directed ; after the manner of booksellers, he did so, and no mean commotion shortly followed, the noise of which was long heard in the land, and reverberations occurred in *The Times* as late as 1873.\*

In September, 1823, as Mr. John Edward Taylor, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, was sitting at dinner, with Mr.

\* This referred to the article by Mr. A. Hayward, of malicious memory, who accused Mr. J. S. Mill of complicity in this affair, which Mill indignantly denied. In 1849, Mr. J. A. Roebuck, believing Mr. Hayward had made similar accusation against him, challenged Mr. Hayward to a duel. Mr. Hayward sent me a pamphlet which showed that he had been acquitted of Mr. Roebuck's charge at the time.

Jeremiah Garnett and other gentlemen, a messenger, whom he had sent to his office, 29, Market Street, for letters that might come in by the evening mails, brought him, besides the letters, a parcel which had come by coach, directed to him at the *Guardian* office. The direction was written on an envelope, and within was an anonymous note, requesting him respectfully to have the parcel delivered to Mrs. Mary Fildes, No. 3, Comet Street, Manchester. The writer gave as his reason for troubling Mr. Taylor that he was not sure of the lady's address. Mr. Taylor, not knowing the handwriting, asked a London guest at the table "if it were the handwriting of any of the London Radicals." Mr. Taylor reading the note, and not opening the parcel, and knowing nothing of its contents, ordered it to be delivered to Mrs. Fildes, who, astounded at what she found in it, and being a capable woman, active in things political, and able to write a good letter, wrote demanding an explanation of Mr. Taylor. She subsequently sent one of the papers to Sir Robert Giffard, Knight, the then Attorney-General, saying that in her opinion "the morals of society would be completely destroyed by them." A year or two later Mrs. Fildes thought differently upon the subject, and with her customary decision said so. It appears from the *Labourer's Friend and Handicraft's Chronicle*, published in London at that period, that similar papers had been sent among the Spitalfields weavers. Mr. Owen never denied the statement that the papers originally "emanated from him." Mr. Place, who preserved the publications in which the foregoing facts are recorded, left nothing from Mr. Owen—so far as I can find—decidedly in reference to it. Indeed, as Owen himself, when editor of the *Crisis*, announced nine years later, namely, October 27, 1832, that his son, Robert Dale, had published a book upon the same subject, and to the same effect, there is no reason to suppose that he intended to contradict the allegation in question. Sir R. Giffard is understood to have taken steps to discover the actual distributors of the papers, and curious traditions have existed as to his success. In 1849, as I have said, an attempt was made to connect J. A. Roebuck with the distribution. In 1873, twenty-five years later, Mr. John Stuart Mill was said to have been one of the parties, probably because his father held strong opinions on this question. No conjecture has been

too wild to obtain circulation at the clubs, as distance of time rendered certainty difficult. Mr. Mill, who neither agreed with Mr. Owen's communism, nor with his son Robert Dale Owen's book on the subject in question, was specially exempted from persons probable. Mr. Owen, who was publicly known to be an actor in the matter, has altogether escaped these charges. It is proof of his wonderful fearlessness that he meddled with this question at all, and it is no less wonderful that, amid all the fertility and hostility of the Anti-Socialist adversaries who attacked Mr. Owen's "systems," this special charge was never made.

The venerable vindictiveness and educated malevolence which pursued Mr. Mill, spared Mr. Owen, nor does it appear to have influenced the eminent friends who acted with Mr. Owen, and to whom everything was known. His theological criticism was remembered against him, and thus Mr. Owen experienced the reality of the maxim of Thomas, that "the propagation of new truths affecting clerical dogmas is the last crime that men forgive."

Beyond any gentleman of his time, Mr. Owen cared for the friendless, regardless of himself. This question concerned none save the poor, and he boldly counselled them not to be coerced by opprobrium into supplying offspring to be ground up alive in the mill of capital, or to be cast aside when the labour market was glutted, to fall into the hands of the constable or the parish overseer.

No notice of this curious and characteristic episode in Mr. Owen's life occurs in the biographies of him which have appeared since his death—not even in the "Life and Times of Robert Owen" by his disciple Lloyd Jones. Nothing is said of it in Sargent's "Life of Robert Owen," containing a variety of facts which it must have taken considerable research and cost to accumulate. Though Mr. Sargent's views were unsympathetic and antagonistic, he never calumniated, although he often failed to judge accurately points which an alien historian could hardly be expected to understand; but as he was never dull, never indecisive, and often was right in the opinions he formed, he was an instructive writer to those who incline to the side of the innovators, and must have considerably increased the curiosity of the public of his generation, who regarded Mr.

Owen, if they knew him at all, as an heresiarch whose proceedings have been unknown in polite society.

In 1840, I left the employment in which until my twenty-third year I was engaged. For a while I was an assistant teacher in a private school in Moor Street, Birmingham. For a year I had charge of the books and correspondence of Mr. Pemberton, a brother of Charles Reece Pemberton, a Venetian wire blind maker. Some time I wrote technical treatises for mechanics who were masters of their craft, but not used to the pen. A publisher had engaged them to supply handbooks by reason of their known skill. After they had told their story in their own way, I retold it for them and they shared their payment with me. At one time I wrote advertisements for an eminent firm whom I persuaded that to tell the truth in them would be the greatest novelty out. I did what I could to combine picturesqueness with veracity, and received 7s. 6d. for each advertisement. The same firm still advertises or I should give their names. At intervals of years I have seen some of my old work among announcements of fashionable commodities.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### *FIRST LECTURESHIP.*

(1841.)

PERSONS favourable to the organization of the social state, whom Robert Owen had incited to action, came to be called "Socialists." Mr. Cobden spoke at times in the House of Commons in condemnation of them without appearing to be aware that there never were any agitators in England of the kind he had in his mind. Continental Socialists meditated rearranging society by force. There never were in England any philanthropists of the musket and the knife. English Socialists expected to improve society by showing the superior reasonableness of the changes they sought. A small branch of these propagandists existed in Worcester. An enthusiastic carpenter had enlarged and fitted up an oblong workshop as a lecture-room, some sympathisers—who never appeared in the hall—furnished means of purchasing materials. These humble lecture-rooms were called "Halls of Science," not that we had much science—merely a preference for it. A less pretentious name would have better pleased me, but it proclaimed our intention of permitting science to be explained on Sundays, when any one among us had any to explain. I, who held that Science was the Providence of Life, agreed with this use of Sunday. In those days science was regarded by theologians as a form of sin. Occasionally we had little festivals of the families of members. Once laughing gas—then a new thing—was administered for amusement. The effect upon the carpenter was quite unexpected; he turned somersaults all down the hall, and downstairs out into the open. Being a heavy man, this unforeseen performance

produced consternation. One of the auditors at this hall became a scientific balloonist, and his name was known over Europe. My first lectureship was at this hall, at a salary of 16s. a week. Socialist salaries were not of a nature to tempt any one to act against his conscience ; but my convictions lying that way, I accepted the appointment. One advantage was that my family, though it consisted of only three persons, found themselves under favourable circumstances for acquiring the art of economy. I had never heard of D'Alembert's motto, "Liberty, Truth, Poverty." I soon saw that they went together in propagandism, but I did not give heed to that.

At first my family resided in Birmingham, which involved a walk of twenty-six miles to visit them. On days when I returned to lecture at night, I used to find that on the first stage to Bromgrove (thirteen miles) I could arrange pretty clearly the order of my intended discourse, while on the second thirteen miles my grasp of the subject seemed weaker ; but the cause of that did not occur to me. Eventually we all resided in Worcester, where, by the introduction of a lady friendly to the "cause" I increased my income by teaching mathematics to a ladies' school, where I was known as Mr. Jacobs, as my own name would have carried alarming associations with it.

After six months, I was proposed as an accredited lecturer, of the "Socialist" movement. The general body was known as the "Association of all Classes of all Nations," which would have been a very considerable society if it had ever answered to its name. It took a second title, that of "Rational Religionists," to which there were many objections—as few would believe in a *rational* religion, and more thought that "rationality" savoured too much of carnal reason. There was a central board for the government of the party, and every year there was a congress at which ten or twelve stationed lecturers were appointed to the chief branches. The term "congress" was an American term introduced by William Pare, and had not been in popular use in England. When the question of my appointment came to be considered, objection was taken to my voice as wanting in strength. The objection would have been fatal had it not been for Mr. J. L. Murphy, an influential Irish member of the board, who said my voice was as strong as that of Lalor Sheil, which could be very well heard by a meeting willing to

listen. Others concluded that, in a party widely credited with subversive and dangerous purposes, an unaggressive voice like mine might confuse prejudice, if it did not disarm it. The result was that I was appointed by the Manchester Congress of 1841, Station Lecturer at Sheffield.

The title given to such persons was "Social Missionary," and some wrote "S.M." after their names. The Sheffield branch wanted a lecturer who was willing also to teach a day school, and for these double duties of speaking three times a week and teaching every day the salary was 30s. To conduct the school more effectually I provided an assistant at my own cost, as I approved of branches having good schools. My assistant was Thomas Paterson, the young Scotchman already mentioned.

Sometimes by small articles for papers, sometimes by a preface to an author's book, sometimes by revising a technical treatise for a writer who had knowledge without words, and by now and then giving private lessons in Euclid, I brought a little increase to the household funds. Once I was selected to deliver the anniversary lectures in Huddersfield, for which travelling expenses were given, and by walking the distance the fare was so much gain. The journey to Huddersfield was thirty miles, and nearing the town I found my mind, which had been very alert on setting out, had become limp. On the Sunday morning when I had first to speak it had not recovered, and it was night before my voice was clear and my ordinary animation returned. I had too little physiological knowledge to know then that great fatigue affected the mind as well as the body, and that physical exhaustion rendered efforts of thought impossible.

It was in Sheffield that I published my first pamphlet, "The Advantages and Disadvantages of Trades Unions." I began with the conviction that it was of little use suggesting improvement in anything until you had shown that you comprehended the good there is already in the thing to be supplemented or superseded. This brought me the acquaintance of Ebenezer Elliott, the Corn Law Rhymer. I had adapted two lines from one of his poems—

"O pallid want ! O labour stark !  
Behold ! behold ! the second Ark—  
The Land ! The Land !"

Instead of "The Land " I substituted " Co-operation." Elliott sent me a friendly protest against changing his terms and destroying his metre, and an invitation to breakfast.

Once, at a public meeting in Sheffield at which I spoke, Elliott rose and said words of me—he being generous and I the advocate of an unpopular party—which would have ruined me had I believed them. His modesty towards himself, his affluence of praise to others, was shown in his saying to Joseph Barker : "I give you brass, you give me gold." It was the reverse in fact. But when he *wrote* criticism or praise, it could always be trusted—he kept close to proportion and truth. My chief friends in Sheffield, outside the Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, were Mr. John Fowler, who was chosen by Mr. Fox and Serjeant Talfourd to write the life of Pemberton ; and Mr. Paul Rodgers, a local poet. One day we all went to the house Ebenezer Elliott had built for himself. He gave us a country luncheon, and strolled with us down the path which he had celebrated in his "Wonders of the Lane." As my hearers in Rockingham Street Hall were Communists, he made merriment for me by repeating his clever lines—

" What is a Communist ? One who hath yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings.  
Idler or bungler, or both, he is willing  
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling."

This was the newspaper definition. The English Communists were exactly opposite. They had a passion for industry, and sought only an equitable division of profits. I valued the society of wits and men of higher cultivation. Neither missionaries nor preachers acquire robust views who live always in the confined atmosphere of their congregations.

Nothing save a strong propagandist predilection would have led me to accept an appointment for which I had little popular qualification. With a bold voice and good presence a little sense goes a long way ; with some audiences it goes all the way. If a splendid voice is accompanied by splendid sense, the orator becomes invincible, as was Gambetta with his voice of storm, thunder, and energy—the mere report of which still echoes in European ears. A striking gesture, a new tone, will sometimes make the fortune of a speech. But without resonance of voice

the tone which charms the ear may not occur. I had nothing to recommend me but the passion of persuasion and the aim of usefulness. For many years the fault beset me of crowding too many objects on the canvas of my speeches. The main subject was then indeterminate. Fortunately, there are always some bird-minded hearers in every assembly—who think in the air. Their good time is when a speaker talks over the heads of his audience—as they are just in the way to catch what he says. Mr. Anthony Young, who afterwards resided with me, then an actor in Sheffield, made me a character in a pantomime. I did not know it when I entered the theatre, and was surprised at the clever personation of myself. Young, with the discernment of the stage, told me I squandered points by not stopping to make them. This was a defect in art. I knew this, and in 1846 purchased a portrait of Talleyrand, which ever after hung in my writing room. Mazzini described him as the “greatest liar in Europe”; but he did not lie in a hurry, and acted on the maxim of “never doing to-day what might by any possibility be put off till to-morrow.” His unhasting face was a charm allaying my futile impetuosity. Swinbourne the tragedian, Weitling the German Communist, Wendell Phillips, and one or two great preachers told me they found incitement in a book on “Public Speaking” I wrote; but it was long before I was successful with hearers, and then only in assemblies within the compass of my voice.

Yet I had some instinct of art. I admired Robespierre—not on account of principles ascribed to him, but because he used one sized paper, and wrote out himself all his speeches in a large and careful hand. No one can do that without detecting verbiage, irrelevance, and limpness of expression. But though I knew the plan to be good, I have never had time to follow it.

Whatever art I had, or could acquire, my audiences had need of it. There are various classes of hearers. One have capacity, and thirst for new ideas, and know what to do with them when they get them. Another class have only room for one idea at a time in their heads, and if they by chance get a new one, it puts out the one they had. Generally the new idea is non-insertable. They are such persons as Sojourner Truth once met, of whom she said in her discerning way, “I would have

told them something, only I saw they had nowhere to put it." A third class, very numerous, have sandy brains. The soil of their minds is loose, and nothing takes root in it. Some brains require a chemical treatment of the soil to get them into a fruitful state and keep them so. An inciting weekly address is the salvation of minds of this order. Those who have room for only one idea in their heads at a time need cranial enlargement, which if attempted at once, the receptacle might give way. The only safe course is slow and continuous expansion. Then there are a large class of petrified publicists. Year by year they remain the same, becoming no wiser, no more discreet, no more daring. They have mere Esquimaux minds, all blubber and bearskin. They are what in new colonies are called the squatters of progress. They sit down on the first bare place they find, and never get up again. At the end of years you find them where they were. They say the same things, they think in the old way, they retail the old suspicions, and if a new idea comes in their way they have no appetite for it. They nibble at it like a rabbit. And if they choose ideas for themselves, they, rabbit like, are allured by the greenest.

Then there is a further class who conclude they know everything, and who think neither sermons, nor books, nor newspapers, nor lectures are of any use or need to them. They fancy themselves self-acting and all-knowing. These are adherents who are at once the ornaments and discouragements of a cause, who disseminate apathy and know it not. Only those of strong and exceptional natures are able to work for a length of time unaided by the stimulus of daily recurring and renewed impressions. It is a fortunate law of human nature that no impression remains long of the same force. Were it not so, the first great sorrow would bow us low all our lives. Disappointment would subjugate us, and we should fall into leaden despair. It is the same with our noblest impressions; they, too, grow weaker with time. No will is strong enough to maintain its pristine force. No high purpose, no deep sense of duty can keep us always at the level of a great resolve. Every man has to deplore how he has failed in carrying out his greatest resolutions. Business, necessity, daily duties, claims of others upon him, new events which none can foresee and none evade, all come and dissipate the fiercest resolution.

“ For each day brings its petty dust  
 Our soon choked minds to fill ;  
 And we forget because we must,  
 And not because we will.”

What it fell to me to teach such hearers as appeared in the hall, were secular grounds of tolerance and unity as might render co-operative efforts possible. The substance may be briefly stated.

Man is small and does not require a big theory of life. A plain working plan is enough ; each creature has two main qualities—susceptibility and resistance. The capacities of receiving noble impressions, and of insensibility to the ignoble ones, are our best endowments. When thought or circumstances create within us impulse of choice or action, we call that will. As we know other persons to be constituted as ourselves, we strive by reason or by surrounding them with suitable material conditions to create the will we wish to prevail. The whole question is described by Wordsworth in the lines—

“ The eye it cannot choose but see,  
 We cannot bid the ear be still,  
 Our bodies feel where'er they be,  
 Against or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are powers  
 Which of themselves our minds impress,  
 And we can feed this mind of ours  
 By a wise passiveness.”

Wordsworth saying this was counted spirituality—in us it was assailed as materialism ; and the clergy were angry with us. According to their own account, God had been very bountiful to them in according to them many graces—but we found discernment was very sparingly vouchsafed to them in those days. Attacked without reason, we went out on the war-path. On the banner entrusted to me I put the words—“They who believe they have the Truth ask no favour, save that of being heard : they dare the judgment of mankind : refused co-operation, they accept opposition—for opposition is their opportunity.” It was demanded of us that we gave our opinion on Theism and Futurity. Mine was brief, but as straight as I knew how to make it.

Outside the world of science and morality lies the great debateable ground of the existence of Deity and a future state.

The ruler of the debateable ground is named Probability, and his two ministers are Curiosity and Speculation. Over that mighty plain, which is as wide as the universe and as old as time, no voice of the gods has ever been heard, and no footstep of theirs has been traced. Philosophers have explored the field with telescopes of a longer range than the eyes of a thousand saints, and have beheld nothing save the silent and distant horizon; and priests have denounced them for not seeing what was invisible. Sectaries have clamoured and the most ignorant have howled—as the most ignorant always do—that there *was* something there, because they wished to see it. All the while the white mystery is still unpenetrated in this life, and we must die to find it out. But a future being undiscovered is no proof that there is no future. Those who reason through their desire will *believe* there is; those who reason through their understanding may yet *hope* that there is. In the meantime all stand before the portals of the untrodden world in equal unknowingness of what lies beyond. In this world which is under our feet we may be equal in friendliness, duty, and justice. The reverence of that which is right is no mean form of worship. As we read in the family motto of the Maharajahs of Benares, “There is no Religion higher than Truth,” and the only truth which can be trusted is that which can be tested here. The believer said to the prophet: “I will set my camel free and trust him to Allah.” Mahomet answered: “Tie thy camel first and then commit him to God.”

Such were the teachings of my lectureship. If it did not go far, it did not mislead. It was for a prudent piety. I saw the gods had a good deal on their hands if they personally took care of everybody, and it seemed most reverential to give them as little trouble as possible. It was the aim of English Socialism to make good citizens, good neighbours, good parents, and good workmen. Our principles went no further, and as Karpos said to Prince Tuctan, we hoped God would take it in good part, and have mercy on our souls.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### *TROUBLE BY THE WAY.*

(1841.)

It never entered into my mind that I should one day be a prisoner. It came about in this wise. Robert Owen, the princely advocate of a new social state, entitled it a "rational religion." Reason in piety was not then, as has been said, understood—faith being regarded as above logic. The Conservatives of that day assailed the religion of usefulness, which taught that the character of man could be improved by better material conditions than then existed. This was thought to diminish the power of going wrong, whereas it merely tended to make virtue inevitable. The Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Philpotts, took the floor of the House of Lords against us, and caused dismissal from office of many of the new way of thinking. My townsman, William Pare, thus lost his registrarship in Birmingham, though a man of high official character and wide civic repute. The lecture-halls of these rationalists being under episcopal license, the lecturers could be called upon to make public oath that they held Christian tenets, and took the Bible as the guide of their teaching—which they did not, excepting so far as its moral precepts were conducive to the nobler human life they advocated. Two of these lecturers—Robert Buchanan, the father of the poet of that name, and Mr. Lloyd Jones—both colleagues of mine, took this oath. Mr. Jones, the foremost man on the social warpath, being an Irishman, was for meeting the enemy with his own weapons—took the oath at once. Mr. Buchanan, being a Scotchman, and having the veracity of the Covenanter lingering in his bones, took a week to consider

whether he would swear the thing which was not — but swore at last. Mr. G. A. Fleming, editor of the *New Moral World*, justified seeking safety by the oath. This kind of oath-taking rather compromised the new *moral* world. Mr. Charles Southwell and myself, with Mr. Maltus Questell Ryall, the son of an engraver in London, and William Chilton, a printer of Bristol, formed a Defiant Syndicate of Four, and issued the *Oracle of Reason*. Southwell was a speaker of dramatic power, familiar with the stage as well as the platform. Ryall was an accomplished iconoclast, fiery, original, and, what rarely accompanies those qualities, gentlemanly. Chilton was a cogent, solid writer, ready for any risk, and the only absolute atheist I have known. His articles in the *Oracle* on the "Theory of Regular Gradation" preceded by twelve years the articles on Evolution by Herbert Spencer in the *Leader*, when "regular gradation" began to receive the name of evolution. Of course we soon got into trouble. For issuing No. 4 of our militant Journal, Southwell was sentenced at Bristol to twelve months' imprisonment. As we had no travelling funds in those days, I walked from Birmingham to Bristol, ninety miles, to visit him in gaol, and "fell among thieves" on my way. I delivered a lecture in the Cheltenham Mechanics' Institution upon Self-Supporting Home Colonies, when a local preacher arose and said "I had spoken of our duty towards man, but had said nothing of our duty towards God," and asked for information thereon. It was plainly open to me to reply that theology was not my subject. At no time did I ever undertake to speak on one subject and introduce another. I had a theological mind and I had a secular mind, but I never had a mixed mind, and always kept distinct, things which are separate. My duty was to refuse to answer an irrelevant question, and to point out that he who asked a lecturer to do it invited him to commit a breach of faith towards his audience, who, assembled to hear one subject, would have another imposed upon them which they would never have come to hear had they foreknown it. In these days this representation would be deemed fair, but in those he who made it was at once accused, amid applause, of "holding opinions which he dared not avow." There were, however, local circumstances which would cause an otherwise reasonable refusal to answer the preacher, to be regarded as an evasion.

At that time there was a young schoolmaster and poet in Cheltenham, named Sperry, who had espoused the social opinions I represented, I, having previously resided in the town as a lecturer upon them. Sperry had expressed social sentiments in a poem he had published. He was told that unless he retracted them he would lose his teachership. He did retract them, which created an impression of social cowardice in the party of social advocates, as the oath-taking by Mr. Lloyd Jones in Bristol was known in Cheltenham. When Sperry had retracted, he was dismissed all the same. He was humiliated, and then ruined. Had I refused to answer the question put to me, I should have increased the belief in our want of courage and candour. So at once I gave a defiant answer to the preacher—but not one that shocked any one, for it produced merriment. In our proposed industrial colonies, I observed, all were free to erect as many churches as they pleased, but, from my point of view, it was bad political economy to expend money that way, seeing the distressed condition in which the people then were. My answer was to this effect, but with terms of audacity which I deemed the occasion required. (The story in detail is told in the History of the Trial at Gloucester.) This unforeseen incident brought consequences which affected all my future life.

All was owing to the habit, from which I have never departed, of permitting discussion after a lecture. It has always seemed to me a criminal thing to deliver any address intended to influence belief and conduct, without giving the hearer opportunity of challenging there and then the validity of the argument advanced in the presence of those who heard it, while the impression was vivid in their minds. Every hearer, according to his belief, has to answer to his conscience or to God for the opinions he holds. Each man has to answer for himself. And since no speaker takes the hearer's responsibility, *he* is deficient in the sense of self-protection who does not think for himself where he has to answer for himself. Not less is the speaker the enemy of the hearer who under any pretext imposes upon him opinions without affording him the means of self-defence by question and debate. Had I prohibited discussion, I should have saved myself a world of trouble. But I should have been dishonest to the hearer, and have known myself to be so. Free discussion has its penalties as well as its advantages. Its advantages are

that new truth rests on a solid foundation when those who accept it know both sides of a new question. The penalties are liability to have free speech abused—meetings thrown into confusion by ignorant, unscrupulous, irrelevant, and malevolent adversaries, and possible imprisonment of the lecturer who answers a question with imprudent candour. But we, who maintained the salutary principle of free debate, were willing to accept this penalty, if it came.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### *ARREST IN CHELTENHAM.*

(1841.)

WITHOUT intellectual distinction Cheltenham had extraordinary theological sensitiveness. It was the common talk of the town, when the incident recorded in the last chapter occurred, that a Mormon preacher was committed to gaol on a charge of blasphemy, for having said in one of his sermons that "Euclid was as true as the Bible." The Grand Jury at Gloucester were suspected of latitudinarianism when they threw out the bill. Had the trial taken place, he had surely been convicted.

Mr. Capper, one of the magistrates, said that what I did was for the purpose of notoriety. Had that been my intent, Cheltenham was the last place in which I should have sought it. As I have elsewhere said,<sup>1</sup> the day is chilled in my memory when I first set foot in the town. Snow had been frozen on the ground a fortnight. I was then a stationed missionary in Worcester sent down to evangelize Cheltenham in social ideas. With a household income of 16s. a week, there was little to feed the passion for "notoriety" upon. I feel now the fierce blast which came in at the train window from "the fields of Tewkesbury," on our way. The cold wrapped us round like a cloak of ice.

The shop lights threw their red glare over the snow-bedded ground as we entered the town of Cheltenham, and nothing but the drift and ourselves moved through the deserted streets. When at last we found a fire, we had to wait to thaw before we could begin to speak. When tea was over, we were escorted to

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Last Trial for Atheism."

the house where we were to stay for the night. I was told it was "a friend's house." Cheltenham is a fashionable town, a watering, visiting place, where everything is genteel and thin. As the parlours of some prudent housewives are kept for show, and not to sit in, so in Cheltenham numerous houses are kept "to be let," and not to live in.

The people who belong to the apartments are like the supernumeraries on a stage—they are employed in walking over them. Their clothes are decent, but they cannot properly be said to wear them; they carry them about on their backs to show that they have such things. In the same manner eating and drinking is rather pantomime than reality. Such a house was the "friend's house" to which we were conducted. We were asked to sit by the kitchen fire on "the bench in the corner," and there we sat from eight till one o'clock, without being asked to take anything to eat. My wife, with her child at the breast, fared badly that night. Waiting upon a party elsewhere kept my "friends" up till two o'clock—up to which time we saw no prospect of bed or supper. Soon after we entered the house, my wife, with a woman's prescience, said, "George, you had better go and buy some food." "Buy food," I replied, in simplicity, "the people at this fine house will be outraged to see me bring in food." I repented me of my credulity that night. When at last I clearly comprehended that we were to have nothing to eat, I proceeded to take affairs into my own hands, and being too well assured of the insensibility of my host, I did it in a way that I conceived suited to his capacity, and began as follows:—

"We have talked for some time about social progress, and if you have no objection we will make some. And if eating," I added, "be not an irregular thing in your house, we will take some supper."

"I am very sorry to say," he answered, "we have nothing to offer you."

"Charge me for bed and board while we are with you," I rejoined, "but let us have *both*. You have bread, I suppose?"

"We have some *rice* bread."

"Perhaps you will toast it."

"Will you have it *toasted*?"

"I will. Could you not make coffee?"

"We have no coffee."

"Tea?"

"We have no tea."

"Any water?"

"No *hot* water."

"Any butter?"

"Yes, we have *salt* butter."

"Then put some on the rice bread," I added, for he did not even propose to do that. I had to dispute every inch of hospitality with him. My "friend," Mr. V., was an instance of that misplacement of which Plato speaks in his "Republic." What a capital Conservative he would have made! No innovation with him—not even into his own loaf!—I was obliged to take the initiative into the "salt" butter.

After seeing the bread toasted, and buttering it myself, to make sure that it was buttered, I put on my hat and went into the streets in search of material out of which to manufacture a cordial, for eight hours had elapsed since Mrs. Holyoake had had any sustenance, and my good host's choice reserve of cold water did not seem suitable.

When I reached the dark streets, to which I was so absolute a stranger, not knowing the neighbourhood, I found the ground slippery, made so by rain frozen on snow: I had not gone (or rather slipped) far before I was lost. Like the sense in a Rousseauian love-letter, I neither knew whence I came nor whither I was going, and when I had succeeded in my errand it was at the last place at which I should wish to be found.

During my absence, that voluptuous caterer, "mine host," whom I had left behind—whose counterpart Maginn must have had before him when he drew the portrait of "Quarantotti"—had proceeded so far as to boil some water. The evening ended without inconsistency, and the bed corresponded with the supper.

The next day I took lodgings, where, expecting nothing, I was no longer disappointed. But on this occasion, profiting by the experience of the preceding night, I went provided with a small stock of loaves and chocolate. My stay in Cheltenham was more agreeable than was to be expected after such an introduction; but I remember that I had to pay my expenses back again, and though they only amounted to 12s., I felt the

want of them afterwards. Yet Cheltenham was not without generous partizans, but, as is common in the incipency of opinion, they were at that time among that class who had fewest means. The experience here recounted was a sample of that frequently recurring, not exactly of the kind to nurture the love of notoriety. The day after the adventure with the preacher I walked to Bristol, where I received a *Cheltenham Chronicle*, the organ of the Rev. Francis Close, afterwards Dean of Carlisle, in which I read that a warrant was out for my apprehension. Thus forewarned by my friends, a prudent person would have kept clear of Cheltenham; but I was not a prudent person. I was of Cobden's opinion—that there are times when it is rashness to do nothing. The motive which influenced me in answering the preacher as I did, disinclined me from running away.

It was a hot and blazing day in June when I walked back (thirty miles) to Cheltenham. The authorities, persuaded that persons of my way of thinking would keep clear of peril, never thought of my reappearing. They kept no look-out for me, and before the sun went down on June 1st, I was at Mr. Adams' house not far from the police station. The Chartists had announced a meeting in the Mechanics' Institution for the night: and I being a friend of theirs, they gave up their room to me. The Chartists were always good at conflict, and readily assisted me, as I had done their leaders in like circumstances.<sup>1</sup> It was soon noised abroad that I was actually speaking at a public meeting in the town. After I had spoken an hour in vindication of free speech in answer to public questions, the superintendent of police entered, armed with all the available force at hand. They formed a handsome addition to the audience, and as they ranged themselves against the walls on either side the door, their shining hats formed a picturesque background to the meeting. This determined me to speak an hour longer—not having foreseen such an opportunity of extending Liberal views in official quarters. At the conclusion I placed myself at the disposal of the chief of the police. Asking to see the warrant for my apprehension, I was told the magistrates did not

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Julian Harney, writing in the *Northern Star*, under date of 11, Hartshead, Sheffield, June 13, 1842, said: "The Chartists of Sheffield know how ever ready Mr. Holyoake was to serve them while in their town."

stand on those ceremonies in Cheltenham. It appeared that they did not know that a warrant was necessary. That night the plank bed in the cell was unpleasant, and more so the tipsy and turbulent inmates there. The next morning came the interview with the acting magistrate, who, to my surprise, was the Rev. Dr. Newell. The Rev. S. Jones was another magistrate. A brewer is not eligible to adjudicate on affairs of the hostelry, but here was a clergyman exercising penal power in the affairs of the pulpit. Gentlemanly scruples were in those days no part of Cheltenham divinity.

The prosecutor was a Mr. Bubb, a particularly gross, furious, squab-built, vulgar person. On my stating to the magistrates that I had been brought there without any proper warrant, Mr. Capper, one of them, stated that any person at the meeting would have been justified in taking me up without any warrant from a magistrate. This would produce plentiful disturbance of the peace of "our Lady the Queen," if every person was entitled, on his own motion, to apprehend every other person who might express opinions distasteful to him. For years after "Cheltenham law" was a byword in legal circles in London.

One of the witnesses against me was a dog-fancier and prize-fighter, pursuits which did not imply theological discrimination or sensitiveness. The other witness was a printer in the *Chronicle* office. Neither had any positive idea of what had been said at the meeting, and they could only swear "to the best of their belief." When two friends tendered bail for me, one of them was refused, because he said that, "to the best of his belief," he was worth the £50 required. I reminded the Bench that the testimony against me had been accepted on the "best of the witnesses' belief." The reverend magistrate resented this as quibbling, and when another friend offered bail, I desired him not to do so, and let the Bench take its own course. Shortly after handcuffs were put on me, which, being too small, pinched my wrists, and, with two policemen, I was taken through the town to walk to Gloucester Gaol, nine miles. This was a needless outrage, as a prisoner who had surrendered himself was not likely to attempt to escape—nor to succeed, if he did, with two policemen with him. Our road lay by the railway station, which was some distance from the town, where friends who had

accompanied me ascertained that by paying the policemen's fares and my own, we might ride—which was done.

The station of Gloucester was also some distance from the city, and as the handcuffs were never removed I had to walk through the city as I had walked through Cheltenham.

It was a doctrine of mine that anger was but the exhibition of ignorance taken by surprise : and that hatred was opposed to economy of time, as it enabled persons whom you knew and detested, to occupy your thoughts with schemes of retaliation. There is a period in law when debts are no longer recoverable, and I have suggested to co-operative societies that associative animosities should be closed with the accounts, and not carried forward to the next quarter. Certainly the best new year's resolve is to cancel the hatreds which the past twelve months may have engendered—to treat them as though they had never been, and begin each new year free from the unprofitable burden of resentment or malevolence to any man. Though this rule has brought me a sense of peace like an annual endowment, I find after fifty years some anti-clerical indignation creep into my mind when the intentional indignities of my march to Gloucester Gaol recur to me.

On Mr. Southwell's imprisonment for editing the *Oracle of Reason*, I had taken his place. The knowledge of this did not commend me favourably to the authorities.

My host in Cheltenham was Mr. George Adams. Indignant at what befell me, he put the *Oracle* in his window and sold it, which led to his being apprehended. His wife, a handsome, intelligent, and spirited woman, indignant at that, continued the sale of the *Oracle*, and she was apprehended with her youngest child in her arms. Four other children were left alone in the house—father and mother both being locked up. When the neighbours found the poor children the neighbours were indignant. The next day Mrs. Adams was liberated on bail, but both she and her husband were committed for trial.

The reverend adversaries into whose hands I had fallen, committed me for felony. Free speech, however objectionable it might be, was not felony. If it was not ignorance in them to treat it so, it was malice. They also said in the warrant that I had spoken "wickedly." Yet there is no wickedness where there is no evil intent.

They said I had "uttered" the words complained of "before children," which was untrue, as there was no child in the place. Had children been present, they could not have understood what was said. But neither accuracy nor veracity were magisterial attainments in 1842.

At that time I was in the custody of the clergy, and this language of theirs was so unexpected and untrue, that it created in my mind a dislike and distrust of them I had never felt before. I have been assured that they merely used certain terms of the law. But lying according to law is a worse offence than that of Ananias, since it adds the authority of law to falsehood. Lying before a God by those who believe Him to exist is surely worse than speaking the truth by those who deem His existence to be unknown. I had been accustomed to regard with reverence the ministers of God as persons who would neither speak nor write what was untrue, however erroneous the doctrines they might hold. I had ample time to think of all this as I sat on the edge of my cell bed during the first night in Gloucester Gaol. The lice I observed creeping about the blankets prevented me lying down.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### *THREE WEEKS IN PRISON FOR NOT TAKING THE OATH.*

(1841-2.)

MARTYRDOM was never to my taste. No person could be more disinclined than myself to acquire that unpleasant distinction. It has been said, "Blessed are ye when men persecute you." I already knew the contrary. Persecution is entirely disagreeable, whether it be incurred for righteousness' sake or any other sake. It was said I sought it. This is always said when public trouble overtakes you. It is the popular excuse of those who bring it upon you. Yet when it comes in consequence of doing what you think to be your duty, it is to be accepted. But he who seeks it is a fool who forfeits all claim to commiseration when he gets what he wanted. Some years later (1847) when I took out a policy in the Equity Law Life Office I asked for the condition that it should not be invalidated if death came to me in prison. The company, like others, held that a policy became void by suicide—the assumption of directors being that as soon as a man insured his life he would cut his throat. I did not expect to die in a prison. I did not want to, I did not mean to, but I did not intend to incur penalties which would affect my family if imprisonment happened to me.

When imprisonment did come to me, I neither feared it nor whined about it. The only favour I asked was not to be put among criminals. The choice offered me was a vacant side of the gaol where the condemned cells lay, with a large yard to walk in. There I spent three weeks, the only occupant of that uncheerful solitude. There was time to prepare my defence,

but the material was lacking. The chaplain vetoed the books which he did not approve. Yet how was a prisoner to defend himself against a charge of the Church, if the chaplain selected the works of reference? On Sir James Graham expressing to the magistrates his disapproval, my books were handed to me. But this was not until the day before my liberation, and only seven days before the assizes opened. They had kept them from me three valuable weeks.

The reason of my detention in prison was my refusal to take an oath. I was required to provide two sureties of £50 each and enter into and swear to my own recognizances in £100. This I declined to do, the oath implying a belief I did not hold. The governor—Captain Mason—who was always gentlemanly, thought this unfair to myself because, the assizes being near, I should, when liberated, have very little time in which to prepare my defence. He said to me, "What does it matter, Holyoake, how many gods you swear by, since you do not appear to believe in any?" I said, "It certainly did not matter to the gods, but it mattered very much to me to pretend to a belief I do not hold. Not assenting to Christianity, how could I take the Christian oath?" At last I was liberated without making an oath, from fear of the scandal of putting a prisoner on his trial who had been denied the means of defence.

This was owing to outside opinion. The *Weekly Despatch*, of great influence in that day, extended to me its protection. "Publicola" (Captain Williams) wrote in condemnation of the conduct of the magistrates. "Publicola's" letters were read all over the country, and each week as they appeared in Gloucester, they occasioned disquietude in the magisterial breast. More than all, Sir James Graham, then Home Secretary, was my friend, as no Home Secretary since has befriended any similar prisoner. He said in his place in Parliament that the magistrates had behaved "with unnecessary harshness" towards me. There was serious censure upon them, and was felt to be so in the county.

Mr. Craven Berkeley, M.P., a friend of the Church, was put up in the House of Commons, in order to obtain the publication of his correspondence with the magistrates that their defence of themselves might be before the public. Sir James Graham adhered to the statements he had made in answer to

Mr. Roebuck's inquiry, namely, that "serious irregularities" had been committed, and said he had ordered an inquiry into them. Sir James was of opinion that they had no defence which could serve them.

Mr. J. A. Roebuck, always the friend of intellectual liberty, presented for me a memorial to Parliament which represented that, as my commitment was to the Quarter Sessions, my judges would be the same magistrates who had already treated me vindictively. Sir James Graham's sense of justice concurred in this view, and when Mr. Roebuck spoke to him upon it he said "justice should be done," and he kept his word. A Bill was immediately brought in and passed, appointing all trials relating to speculative opinion to take place at assizes only, where an independent judge presided. Thus the magistrates were put out of court. I was the first person tried under this Act.

On my liberation I went to London, which I had never seen, walking most of the way. It seemed to me an enchanted city as I entered it, and seems so still. My first night was spent in a summer-house, in a garden in Lambeth, with my colleague on the *Oracle*, M. Q. Ryall, arranging the order of my defence. Morning had long broken before we lay down on the benches to sleep. In those days there was an hostelry near the Mansion House, known as the "City House of Commons," where successive city politicians from the years of the preceding century had discussed public affairs. I was invited to give a narrative of the proceedings at Cheltenham. Afterwards the company made a subscription towards the expenses of the trial. Another night I spoke in the Rotunda, Blackfriars Road. "Publicola" was present, and gave an account in the *Despatch* of what I said, which, better than anything I might say now, will satisfy the reader as to the nature of the principles for which we contended, which, admitted now, then excited implacable hostility and personal defamation.

Captain Williams said :—"Mr. Holyoake delivered a lecture on the Right of Free Discussion to a crowded audience in the Rotunda. He commented on his treatment in Cheltenham, of which mention was made in this journal [the *Despatch*] at the time. The magistrates on that occasion declared that they did not care of what religion he might be so long as he did not

propagate his doctrines. Mr. Holyoake then expatiated very eloquently upon this selfish principle. 'Thus,' he said, 'a man may see the errors of certain systems, and yet not point out emendations.' Our ideas, argued the lecturer, are engendered by the objects around us, and if we are prosecuted by law for the expression of these ideas the external objects which created our ideas ought to be prosecuted. For any class of men to take upon themselves to say to the people, 'If you think in a manner which militates against our ideas, you must not express your sentiments,' is degrading. Without liberty of speech, interchange of ideas, which freedom of discussion can alone encourage, is impossible; no new systems of utility can be adduced; and had not opinions been more or less freely circulated at different times, humanity would be without progressive civilization. Our wealth, our knowledge, our power, are to be attributed to the Press and to the diffusion of opinions. The Press has converted the world into one large conversational party, whose views, wishes, and opinions are thereby communicated to each other. Speculative opinions beget important truths, and useful systems are founded most frequently upon ideas that were at first but wild theories. If the law describes a magic circle around the radii of men's ideas, it naturally forbids the entertainment of progressive measures, and enforces a stationary and sedentary position, to which the activity of the human mind and the nature of human interests are both averse. New generations have new interests, which are only to be defined by legislative enactment, after due and unchecked discussion. All the learning which our greatest men have ever possessed would little avail posterity, unless their assertions might be duly canvassed. It is a very singular fact that we may discuss astronomy, chemistry, botany, geology, and other sciences, but our sentiments must be curbed by the law when once we touch upon politics or religion. Such was the subject of Mr. Holyoake's lecture, in the course of which he uttered many striking truths of an original character, which elicited considerable applause." (*Weekly Despatch*, July, 1841.)

It was within those few days of my visit to London that I made the acquaintance of Mr. W. H. Ashurst, whose friendship then and afterwards was of the greatest advantage to me. He advised me as to my defence, and John Humphrey Parry, after-

wards Serjeant Parry, then a young barrister, prepared the legal argument which I used at my trial.

One night I went down to the House of Commons. It was the old house, afterwards destroyed by fire. Before long I heard my own name pronounced to my surprise. A young prisoner never feels safe for some time afterwards, and I thought I was going to be apprehended again. It was merely my friend Mr. Roebuck, who was presenting a memorial to the House concerning the legal irregularities of the Cheltenham Bench.

It was a bright summer afternoon when I set out alone from the house of my eldest sister, in which my family resided, in Aston, Birmingham, to proceed to Gloucester Assizes. It was not in my power to leave any provision for those I left behind, owing to the unforeseen and unsought apprehension which had befallen me. My little daughter, Madeline, ran from her mother's knee to the door, when she found I had gone, and called after me down the street. Her sweet, clear voice arrested me. I looked back, and saw her dark, black eyes gleaming. I never met her glance again, nor heard her voice any more.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### *THE TRIAL.*

(1842.)

THE assizes opened on August 2, 1842. Mr. Knight Hunt, the author of "The Fourth Estate," who succeeded Dickens as editor of the *Daily News*, reported the trial for me. Hearing that I intended to defend myself, the magistrates told me "the Court would not hear me." The judge, being told of my intention, decided to take my case last, which caused the assizes to extend into another week. On Saturday my case might have come on ; but no one could conjecture how long I should speak. The fear of the Court having to sit until Sunday morning caused the judge to defer the trial till Monday. This made trouble among the javelin men attending upon the judge, who had to be kept in the city. The jurymen who had left their farms, their barrels, their poultry, flour mills, shop tills, and orange baskets, suffered in mind, body, and estate ; and not less the authorities who found with consternation £200 added to the county expenses through my wilfulness. The Shire Hall was crowded as early as ten o'clock on Monday morning ; some of the nobility of the county and wives of clergymen were present, and a fair assortment of surplice wearers.

No one was bound over to prosecute Mrs. Adams. It was not intended that she should be tried, but she was bound out of mere vindictiveness to appear at the assizes, and was kept wandering about the court for ten days, which amounted to a considerable fine, considering the limited means of her household and anxiety for her five children left to chance care. Had

she been a lady, with means of defence, they would not have attempted it. I saw then that the people are never so malignant towards the rich as the rich are towards the poor ; as the powerful are towards those of less estate.

Being unable to bring over their bail, she and her husband were alarmed at being told that their bail would be escheated. I told Adams to go into court and state to the judge that he was unable to bring his bail, but he and Mrs. Adams were there ready to surrender themselves. The judge kindly told them that that was sufficient. Mr. Adams's case was first taken. As the prosecution of Adams was owing to his generous resentment of my arrest, I was very solicitous that he should not incur any consequences I could prevent. It was my duty to defend the right of free speech, but he was under no responsibility of that kind, and I therefore requested my friends to provide counsel for him. We chose Mr. Thompson, because he was the son of General Perronet Thompson, as we thought him less likely to make a compromising defence. In those days, and for many years after, there was no barrister, except Mr. Serjeant Thomas, of London, who would defend a heretic without apologizing for his opinions. This Mr. Thompson did at the conclusion of his defence, and expressed "contrition" on the part of the defendant. I said to Adams, in the hearing of the Court, "Don't permit him to do that unless you are really contrite." Adams at once told the judge that he did not concur with what the counsel said, as he did not feel "contrition" for defending, in his humble way, the right of free speech. This did not improve his sentence, but made it more honourable to him. He was awarded one month's imprisonment.

Mr. Adams had witnesses to his character who described him as of entirely good repute, and, indeed, "a pattern of morality in all the relations of life." The judge told him that "in a charge of robbery that might avail him, but unless he had testimony that he was a Christian it could not avail him in a charge of that kind."

Entering the dock on my name being called, I asked Ogden, the chief gaoler, a tall, stout, surly, imperious, pock-marked person, who had had charge of me in prison, to hand me a box which lay near. Thinking it his duty to show the disrespect he presumed the Court to entertain, he told me to take my place

at the bar. Again my injunction was, "Hand me my box." Looking indignantly at the corded chest outside the dock, he said, "You can't have that box here. Go to the bar and plead." "Nonsense, give it me," was my reply. Beginning to think it was he who was detaining the Court, he reluctantly did as I told him, when I applied to the judge for the use of a table. The judge said, "There ~~is~~ one," pointing to a ledge in the dock which, his lordship thought, would serve my purpose. Although not convenient, I proceeded to arrange my books and papers there, which occupied twenty minutes. By which time it was remarked the dock resembled a small bookseller's shop. The judge looked on with great patience, and when ready I went forward and pleaded. Mr. Alexander was the prosecuting counsel. He was less coarse, but as malignant as Mr. Bubb. He told the jury, "I had not put my diabolical intent in the announcement of the lecture, but had concealed it, with a view to attract an audience," which was contrary both to fact and evidence. The Cheltenham Bench, to do them justice, never said this. It was pure invention on the part of Mr. Alexander to recommend me to the favourable consideration of the jury.

The only offence chargeable against me was that of incidentally, without premeditation or intention, and under the provocation of an insolent question, for which no occasion had been given—uttering certain words—yet the Court permitted an indictment to be read which described me as a "labourer," though I was well known as a public lecturer, who had resided in Cheltenham in that capacity. It charged me with devising, intending, and maliciously publishing with a "loud voice" (which I never possessed) the answer to the question of a preacher, intending "with force and arms to bring Almighty God into disbelief." Seven farmers, one grocer, one poulterer, one miller, one nondescript shopkeeper, and one maltster were then empanelled to ascertain whether I had, or had not, assaulted Omnipotence with "force of arms." The utmost offence in my words were infinitesimal compared with the profanity of this amazing indictment. It said I wickedly "composed the words I had spoken, although they occurred in debate without chance or possibility of premeditation. It charged me with having spoken "against the peace of our Lady the Queen," whereas I had neither spoken against the peace nor broken the

peace, and had neither thought of the Queen nor meant her disrespect.

Historians think they illustrate their pages very conclusively when they quote legal documents describing the profession and purposes of some person recorded therein. Why should law courts, which profess to be the guardians of public morality, lie more than rumour, in their documents?

The *Oracle of Reason*, which I undertook to edit during Mr. Southwell's imprisonment, made the defiant declaration, written by Ryall :—"We war not with the Church but the Altar—not with the forms of Christianity but with Christianity itself—not with the attributes but with the Existence of Deity." After what had taken place I was determined to maintain the right of inquiry into these things. My acquaintance with heresy was too short and my knowledge too limited to enable me to do more intelligently. The conception of Deity entertained by the clerical adversaries we encountered seemed to me neither true nor desirable, and I believed that God Himself must dislike persons of that way of thinking about Him.

My defence if it lacked prudence did not lack explicitness. I spoke nine hours and fifteen minutes. In the latter part my voice much improved in strength and tone. When the Court adjourned at mid-day, some ladies, observing that I was taking nothing, offered me some tartlets they had brought for their own refreshment : one I was told was the wife of a clergyman. Not needing to eat, I declined the kindly offer.

When I had spoken six hours, the governor of the gaol came to me to ask how long I should continue, as the judge was interested in knowing. I answered, "If the Court was likely to hear me, I should end in three hours." In all reason the Court "had heard me sufficiently," but the magistrates, who had told me repeatedly that "the Court would not hear me, and I should not be allowed to make my own defence," did me harm in making me thus persistent. When I had spoken some three hours longer, it occurred to me that the Court "had heard" me, and I concluded.

Mr. Justice Erskine said, "If I could convince the jury that my only meaning was that the incomes of the clergy ought to be reduced, and that I did not intend to insult God, I should tell the jury that you ought not to be convicted." This was

the exact purport of what I said. To "insult God" was never in my mind; nor in anybody's mind. It is ever some degrading conception of Deity which is denied. I never knew a case of an atheistic denial in which there was not more reverence in the mind of the heretic than the prosecutor. Had I confined myself to the two points named by the judge, there was a chance my sentence might have been mitigated. But my mind was set upon two other things—one was that we would seek neither favour nor mercy by solicitation or concession; the other was to vindicate the right to say what I did, whatever it might be taken to mean.

Mr. Justice Erskine suggested to the jury that there was no evidence that I had connived at some person putting the question to me to give me an opportunity of uttering these sentiments. This was very fairly said—had the jury been intelligent—but in effect it was a most injurious suggestion. The counsel had put the idea of connivance into their heads, and the stolid and prejudiced jury believed the judge to confirm it. I expected twelve months' imprisonment, as my defence contained no apology, but was absolute and defiant for free speech. The judge admitted that, with my views, I could not honestly answer my questioner otherwise than I did, and, being a young man, he gave me six months' imprisonment to encourage me in candour.

That night Captain Mason remarked that he thought the sentence was not to be much complained of, seeing how many hours I had occupied the Court. In this I quite concurred with him, and never did complain of it. Indeed, I more deserved the imprisonment for the defence than the offence. Never having been a prisoner before, and unacquainted with the ways of magistrates, their ignorant menace had harmed me—made me resentful, and exposed me to the charge of being wanting in good sense, which was more serious in my mind than to be thought wanting in orthodoxy.

Mr. Justice Erskine was the grandson of the famous Lord Chancellor of that name, who defended the publication of one of Thomas Paine's books. The Erskines were descendants of one of the oldest Scottish families. Mr. Justice Erskine bore small trace of his Scottish descent, and was a placid, mild-mannered English gentleman when I made his acquaintance.

He displayed patience and good temper during the unconscionable time I detained him upon the Bench. Some time after he disappeared from the Bench. How I never inquired—always retaining respect for his memory for his fairness to me.

It was eleven o'clock at night when I walked from court to gaol. Captain Mason considerably asked me if I objected to go with two stray criminals he had in charge. I said I would prefer to walk with Adams only. It was so arranged, and together we set out. Before being locked in my cell I asked if I could have a little of something to eat. I had been thirteen hours in court without food, and a feeling of extreme hollowness came over me. All that could be got for me at that hour was a cup of warm water, and the warder found an old apple in his pocket, which he kindly gave me, and with these I made the first repast of my new imprisonment.

But for a misadventure of refreshments, I might have fared better that day. At that time, a Mrs. Chichester resided in Gloucestershire, who took interest in social improvement, and had enough experience to know that the theological portraits of heretics were not executed by pre-Raphaelite artists skilled in adherence to the truth of nature. She knew that in matters of controversy people who read only one side of a question and boast of the duty of not knowing the other, did not come within the pale of competency or trust; she therefore sent down to Gloucester small presents of wine and birds, as she understood I might have to wait about court seven or ten days before the trial came on. The medium for conveying those kindly gifts was Mr. Fry, whom she knew as professing the lofty moral mysticism of John Pierrepont Greaves, who had disciples in Cheltenham. Mr. Fry, however, was not mystical—he was very practical, for, being a teetotaler, he drank all the wine himself, and, being a vegetarian, he ate the birds. Mr. Fry was editor of the *Communist Apostle*, one of whose mottoes was that "It is the beauty within that reflects beauteous light on outward objects." It was presumably on this principle that my wine and pheasants became irresistible to him.

On the morning of my trial he brought me a small bottle of raspberry vinegar, which he said Mrs. Chichester had sent, as it might be of use to me in speaking. It was two years after before I learned what else she had sent. She must have

wondered at my want of civility in never sending a word in acknowledgment.

One day, attending the courts during the ten days I was awaiting my own trial, I saw a man sentenced to transportation for life to Norfolk Island. His offence had arisen in ignorant and depraving circumstances, yet, when he heard the ferocious sentence, in genuine and awkward humbleness he made a rustic bow to the Bench, saying, "Thank you, my lord." Ignorance had never appeared to me before so frightful, slavish, and blind. Unable to distinguish a deadly sentence passed upon him from a service done to him, he had been taught to bow to his pastors and masters, and he bowed alike when cursed as when blessed.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### *SIX MONTHS IMPRISONMENT FOR ANSWERING A QUESTION IN DEBATE.*

(1842.)

"Have you bethought you of the tedious days  
And dreary nights of your imprisonment?  
The long endurance, whose monotony  
No tidings come to cheer! *This* were the trial!  
It is the detail of blank intervals—  
Of patient sufferance, where no action is,  
That proves our nature. Have you this thought o'er?"

J. W. MARSTON.

No. It did not appear to me to matter. In a general way I had an impression that imprisonment was unpleasant. But that seemed no reason for not doing what was right. The maxim that conscience was higher than consequence always appeared true to me. Imprisonment was worse in my time than in the days of Leigh Hunt and Carlile. Hunt had books, flowers, and company. Pleasant visitors had access to Carlile, who spent hours in his society. Except through the bars of a gate, I saw no friend. I was imprisoned in a city far from those to whom I was best known, and few visits were possible. The first and chief of the visitors was Richard Carlile, who came to tell me of his approval of my defence. This, from the most intrepid defender of free speech of this century, tended to render me indifferent to the discomfort of my new residence.

The visiting justice who most interested me was Mr. Bransby Cooper, brother of Sir Astley, the famous surgeon. He formerly represented Gloucester in Parliament. He was a man of great stature, great tenderness, great humanity, and, like Lord Byron, a man of tumultuous passion, with a voice like the Plymouth Sound. Old women would waylay him on his road to the gaol.

He would brandish his stick at them, and drive them away with menaces and threats which could be heard across the city ; but though they fled, they returned, for they knew that in the end he would give them all the money he had in his pocket. He would tell me in his stentorian way, before the other prisoners, that I was "a fool for being an atheist," and end by saying, "I could not be one—I did not look like one, nor speak like one." His son was chaplain of the gaol. The old gentleman was very anxious for my conversion, and, had he brought it about, he would no doubt have generously given the credit to his boy. It was therefore a kind of family speculation that I should be brought to a "state of grace." Yet when my little daughter died, and her mother wished to bring the surviving one to me, Mr. Bransby Cooper kindly ordered that we should have the use of the magistrates' room for an interview, without the presence of an officer. This unforeseen consideration—so delicate and trustful—inspired me with real respect for him, which has never departed from my mind. I would have been converted if I could to gratify him. One day the governor told me that Mr. Bransby Cooper had said before a meeting of magistrates, at which he had laid some representation of mine, that "he did not believe I could tell a lie," which was very generous in him, considering the prejudice he entertained towards my opinions. This arose from a prisoner (one Upton) being found smoking. He said he had brought the tobacco (I had given him) in with him after the trial—probably to save me from being made answerable. It was some I had upon me in court. This man, who was in the common room, was subject to fits, which he said tobacco mitigated. So I gave him some. It was a reflection upon the vigilance of the officer who received him if tobacco had escaped his notice. To prevent Ogden, the officer, being wrongfully accused, I sent a note to the governor, saying it was I who had given the tobacco to Upton. I owned it was a censurable violation of the prison rules, and stated that I should not demur to the consequences. None ensued. Probably the authorities were gratified that their officer was vindicated from the suspicion of laxity of vigilance. The tobacco was given me at the time of my trial, and I was not searched after sentence.

The Rev. Robert Cooper, the chaplain of the gaol, had the

kindly nature, but none of the force of character, of his father. He was merely a regulation clergyman, who believed he had spiritual duties to discharge ; but his piety was like cold water—it gave you the discomfort of dampness, and when dry again you were as you were before. Still I retain respect for him. He had none of that spite of piety I had hitherto experienced, and he was only disagreeable as a matter of official duty. A prison is a place of organized brutality, and is so intended. For a chaplain to speak of “divine love” *there* is not to understand his business. A single humane act does more to spiritualize a man than a thousand exhortations without it.

The Hon. Andrew Sayer was one of the visiting justices. He was no soldier of the Cross. He brought me “Paley’s Natural Theology,” and Leslie’s “Short and Easy Method with the Deists,” which he asked me to read. This I promised to do ; and that he might satisfy himself that the promise was fulfilled, I said he might examine me in the works afterwards—but he never did. I wrote pamphlets upon their arguments (“Paley Refuted in his own Words,” and “A Short and Easy Method with the Saints”) to show that they had received careful attention.

Another of the visiting justices was the Rev. S. Jones, an aged Wesleyan minister, who appeared deferential to his brother justices, placid in speech, and only ill-mannered professionally. He would occasionally deliver a little lecture to me, before the other prisoners, on the belief I ought to entertain. One day he quoted to me the ignorant remark of David, that “the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” This is what the fool never does say, the subject being beyond his capacity. Certainly I had never said it in my heart or otherwise. It had appeared to me to require infinite knowledge of the universe to affirm or deny that stupendous proposition. “There,” exclaimed Mr. Jones, “you see David says you are a fool.” Whereupon I answered “that I no more admired rudeness in the mouth of David than I did in the mouth of a magistrate.” Every one present heard me say it, and the Reverend Samuel looked amazed, was unable to reply, and never more referred to the subject.

Before long the magistrates became a more serious trouble to me—probably their version was that I became a trouble to them.

They called upon me to wear the prison dress. My answer was that "I did not wish to do it." It was the dress of crime, and as I was no criminal it would be admitting it to wear the dress of crime by my own choice. In gaol I knew official force must be supreme ; therefore, I never said "I would not " do a thing, only that "I did not wish to do it." Of course they said they should compel me. In that case my reply was "it would be necessary to dress me every morning, as I might not like to put the dress on myself." As it was never done, I fancy they thought the trouble of it might be too much for them, or it might be that they were in doubt whether Sir James Graham would sanction it.

Another trouble soon arose. When the prayer bell rang the first morning, all the prisoners filed out to chapel, but I remained. Seeing my allotted place vacant, the chaplain sent the gaoler for me. I said "it was incredible that the chaplain should send for me. He knew my imprisonment was owing to my not properly believing in his ministration, and that my voluntary attendance at his chapel would be hypocrisy in me." The gaoler said "he must carry out his instructions and take me there." My reply was, "In that case you had better get assistance and carry me, as I do not think I should like to go. Whether the chaplain's congregation will be edified by seeing a dissentient worshipper carried into chapel every morning it will be for him to decide." Probably the gaoler concluded that this mode of bringing me to church needed special instructions—he went to seek them, and returned to me no more.

That morning the chaplain sent for me to account to him for my non-appearance at church. The explanation I gave him was that the service was mainly taken from the Prayer Book, which it seemed impiety to solemnly repeat as true when you knew it was not so. The chaplain said, "But you know, Mr. Holyoake, that you are in prison, and must do as you are bidden." "Yes, I am quite aware I am in prison. I am under no illusion as to that. Still it does not justify me in addressing to Heaven words not true. If you will arrange that I may come into church at the time when you commence to preach, I am ready to do that. Your sermon may have newness of thought instructive to me." The chaplain was not displeased, but did not consent, and I never went to prayers or sermon.

One day towards the end of my term the chaplain thought he ought to do something to change my views, and asked whether I would accompany him to the chapel and talk in a friendly way on the subject of spiritual conviction. As to that I remarked "I had undergone one conviction, and felt no desire for another." However, assenting, we went together to the chapel, where he entered the reading-desk, I remaining standing where he left me. Seeing that, he civilly pointed to a front bench for me to be seated, and began a little oration to me, the sole member of his congregation in that gloomy chapel, where every seat had borne the impress of a thousand scoundrels. When he came to the end he asked me "what I had to say." Receiving no reply, he concluded he was making an impression, and began another short address, at the end of which he again asked me my opinion. As his auditor still remained silent, he took heart again and commenced a third little oration. A third time he appealed to me for some expression of opinion upon his arguments. I then said, "I had no opinion to give. He had spoken to me officially as chaplain, and addressed me as a prisoner, and in that character it was my lot to listen to him. If he wished me to converse with him, he must treat me on a footing of equality. That place was too cold for reasoning," it being an inclement month. He then asked me to accompany him elsewhere. Arriving at a warm cell, where blankets were aired, we had some friendly argument, and he asked me to accept a present of a Bible. It was thought a great thing to give me a Bible. As it had occasioned my imprisonment, it was bad taste to offer it to me; it was not calculated to excite my gratitude. The copy he offered me was a little, squab, dumpling edition, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian Knowledge at 10d. I remarked to the chaplain, "I should not like to carry a mean-looking little book like that. It was not respectful to God to present His Word in that curmudgeon form; but I would accept a better-looking copy, with marginal references down the centre, such as might assist me in trying to reconcile what appeared to me its many contradictions." So our interview ended, but the 7s. 6d. edition upon which I had fixed my mind never came to hand.

The prisoners I found in the common room were, with one exception, ignorant, and were there for acts of violence, or

minor thefts, or frauds. In the day-time I kept a little school and taught them something. One was a young, good-looking man, belonging to London, whom I thought well of. When his term of imprisonment was up, I entrusted him with two volumes of Hume and Smollet's "*History of England*," which I had in numbers, to get bound for me, and deliver at the *Oracle* office in London, and I gave him money to pay for the binding. My confidence was not successful, as he kept the money and sold the books.

The chief prisoner was a Mr. Wall, who had been postmaster at Cheltenham, said to have been put in that office by the influence of a peer, for reasons relating to his birth. He had opened letters and taken the money out. One case was very shocking. A servant-girl had saved her money up and sent it to a soldier in the army. Never receiving any answer, she thought him unfaithful, and poisoned herself. Receiving no communication, as she had promised him, the soldier thought she had deserted him, and shot himself. This scoundrelly postmaster was pleasant-spoken, gentlemanly, and cultivated. His criticisms of some things I wrote were instructive to me. He was entirely pious, and punctual at prayer, but a knave at heart.

My liberation occurred some time before Wall's, and he wrote to me shortly after, making in his letter some defamatory remarks upon the governor, and, thereby, implying that I shared the writer's views. As the governor would read the letter, he might think that, despite my professions of respect for him when in his charge, I had used different language privately. Captain Mason, however, wrote upon the letter himself saying that "he did not believe that Wall's expressions were warranted by any remarks of mine, as he had always found me honourable in my statements." This was handsome in Captain Mason, and increased my regard for him.

My prison companions, therefore, were not of an edifying or improving class; but there were other discomforts, different and far more disquieting, which will never depart from my mind. Word was sent me that my child was ill, and then a letter came saying she was dead. The governor considerably called me out into the yard, and gave it to me. It was not till after my liberation that I knew the manner of her death. The

sole income of home was from subscriptions from friends in various parts of the country, supposed to average 10s. a week ; but it was not regular. A few days before the fever took the child, her mother was carrying her through Bull Street, Birmingham, when she cried from hunger for a bun in a window. There was no penny to buy it, and the frenzied mother slapped the child to quiet her. She never forgave herself for doing that, and forty years later she oft repeated the last words of the child on the night of her death, when she exclaimed that "I was coming to see her"—repeated them in the tones of the child which went into the mother's heart for evermore.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### *OTHER TROUBLES IN PRISON.*

(1842-3.)

OWING to a Chartist prisoner having died in a neighbouring gaol from disease contracted through bad air, bad diet, and damp, as poor Holbery of Sheffield had done, a Commission was sent down by the Government to take evidence. Dr. Bisset Hawkins, with his sharp look and scrutinising eyes, was at the head of it. The Commissioners came round the cells and asked me, among others, whether I had any complaint to make. I said "Yes." One night, between 9 and 10 o'clock, the gaoler came into my cell and told me to dress, as the Commissioners wished to see me. On arriving before them, and observing Captain Mason and the surgeon were present, I held my peace. Reminded by Dr. Hawkins that they sent for me, understanding I had a complaint to make, I explained they could not expect to obtain evidence from prisoners in the presence of the governor, since they would remain in the power of those who might resent afterwards what a prisoner had said ; even the surgeon had many ways of retaliation. The governor had behaved to me with courtesy and humanity. He was always a gentleman, and if he had had to hang me he would have apologized for the inconvenience to which he was putting me and have had the bolt withdrawn while I was saying "Don't mention it." It was not that I had any distrust of the governor, but I wished to show the Commissioners that they were not going the way to collect prison facts for an honest report. Dr. Hawkins said, "Captain Mason and the surgeon had better leave." Observing me still silent, Dr. Hawkins asked the

cause. I answered that the Commissioners ought to give a prisoner a guarantee that no personal consequences should ensue to him after they had left, as he would still remain in the hands of the authorities without protection, if they took offence at any allegation he made. Dr. Hawkins assured me that that should not occur.

Then I explained that in that gaol the health of prisoners was in the hands of a kind-hearted but timorous surgeon, who owed his appointment to the magistrates, and had not the resolution or independence to act upon his own judgment when it conflicted with their political, theological, or personal prejudices against prisoners. They explained to me that if a surgeon failed in his duty he was responsible. I answered that was so, but a prisoner must die before the responsibility could be brought home to the surgeon, and that was very grave consolation. They seemed amused at my unconscious use of the word "grave," for they remembered that it was owing to the recent death of a prisoner that they were sent down to inquire into the cause of it. I added that county magistrates did not seem very bright, and had no clear idea of their duties. The Commissioner did not encourage me in these remarks, but they were made before they could stop me. I said some of the cells were filthy and some beds alive with vermin. No prisoner expected tenderness, but cleanliness ought to exist, together with security for life. The dependent position of the doctor, however, afforded none, unless a prisoner was a criminal, then the authorities had no prejudice against him. Neither could they get at the truth they were sent to inquire into and make an honest report to the Crown, unless they caused it to be understood that prisoners who gave them information would be protected. They promised me again that no resentment should follow; nor did it. The governor was civil as heretofore, and the doctor kindly gave me a mutton-chop in my broth. Though inclined to vegetarianism I was glad of that.

The Commission reported finally that Gloucester Gaol lay low, was unhealthy, and recommended that the gaol in which the Chartist died should be superseded. No doubt the poor Chartist was killed in it, all according to law, as poor Holbery was, and as Ernest Jones was nearly killed. No Irish prisoner has run greater risks. Thomas Cooper would have fared no

better save for his wondrous personal resistance. They thought they had driven him mad before the authorities relaxed their restrictions. Under the rules of the gaol, the authorities could have killed me had I resisted indignity as Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Mandeville did, and would have run me very near to it had not Sir James Graham and Mr. Roebuck been my friends.

The quality of mind of the visiting justices who had me in charge may be seen in this instance. At the Christmas, which occurred during my imprisonment, it came to their knowledge that a poor labourer had got himself under a short sentence, in order to be in gaol on Christmas Day ; for on that "day of glad tidings" it was the kindly custom to mark it to the desolate prisoners by a treacle dumpling, with a few raisins in it. It was not much of a taste of the "glad tidings," but it gave pleasure ; to some believing hearts among the prisoners it was comfort, and it gave the only sign, all the year round, that they lived in a Christian land. Instead of being struck with compassion that there should be an honest labourer, so hopeless of tasting a bit of Christmas pudding as to get himself incarcerated for a week for that transient pleasure, the magistrates, three clergymen among them (the Rev. and Hon. Andrew Sayer, Rev. Dr. Newell, Rev. Samuel Jones, the chaplain concurring), abolished Christmas pudding on Christmas Day for all the prisoners there, evermore. Thus these clergymen taught the prisoners to rejoice in the "glad tidings of great joy" brought by Christ. Because one poor workman got into prison against Christmas pudding day, they reasoned from that single instance that all the workmen of Gloucester would, if they knew it, get into gaol from the same cause ! It is said to be a sign of the ignorance of the people that they reason from a single instance, instead of from a majority of similar instances. But here were magistrates, educated at college, as ignorant as the uninstructed rabble, and more cruel.

After a time, Sir James Graham, in answer to a memorial of mine, sent word for me to be allowed to sit up at night until nine o'clock. It was a great waste of time for me to be shut up in darkness from four o'clock in winter-time until eight o'clock next morning, sixteen hours. I contrived some mitigation by secreting the cover of a book, sticking pins in the sides at even

distances, and running a thread across from side to side. It resembled the page of a ruled copy-book—save that the lines were elastic. By running a sheet of paper under the threads I could write with a pencil in the dark, between the lines. In this way I prepared articles for the *Oracle of Reason*, and got them conveyed as opportunity offered to the post. This night work implied sitting up in bed, and against this was the cold. For two months I was never warm. Besides, I was deteriorating in other ways. My pillow was of coarse sacking stuffed with cocoa-nut fibre, so hard that it flattened and elongated my ears beyond the length which my adversaries expected to find in a person of my way of thinking.

So it was welcome news when Sir James Graham's order came. But Sir James had never been a prisoner (all Home Secretaries ought to be imprisoned before taking office), and did not know that the magistrates would construe every instruction against the prisoner. As he did not say he intended to grant the continuance of fire and light, they construed his kindly interference to mean permission to sit up in cold and darkness. Then I began to regret my disbelief in future perdition, as there was no adequate place hereafter to which these magistrates could go. In this respect imprisonment did succeed in shaking my faith a little.

One night, many years afterwards, in the smoking-room of the House of Commons, I mentioned to Sir Wilfrid Lawson that I cherished grateful memories of his uncle for his generous interference on two occasions on my behalf when I was a prisoner, with no other friend in authority save himself. At another time Sir Wilfrid told me that it was a consolation to Sir James Graham to hear what I had said, "for though he had served his country for many years, and not unsuccessfully, he feared he would only be remembered as the Home Secretary who opened Mazzini's letters." Lord Aberdeen denied that the contents of the letters were communicated to the Austrian Government. Unfortunately, you do not always know when a minister speaks the truth. It is their custom to give a technical answer which is beside the point of the inquiry. The letter might be shown to the Austrian minister without a copy being officially communicated to him. Anyhow, the brothers Bandiera, of noble family, were captured and shot in

consequence of Mazzini's letters being opened. If Sir James did communicate a letter he had opened to a foreign power, he did no more than all Home Secretaries had done before, and he was no worse than his predecessors. All Home Secretaries since have opened letters, and do so still. There is a popular understanding that an English Home Secretary shall not act as a spy for foreign governments. But I remember no assurance being given that they shall never so act. The intention of Liberals in 1844 was not to hold up Sir James Graham as worse than other Home Secretaries, but to stop the system which prevailed in his office when he came to it. It is conceivable that he thought foreign ministers were as just-minded as he was, and would use information for precaution, and not for murder. Anyhow, there has been no Home Secretary in my time who has shown the same regard for the self-respect and rights of unpopular prisoners as Sir James Graham showed towards me.

We had few friends in those days, but there was one whom those of us who went out in the forlorn hope never forget, and to whom I gratefully inscribed my "History of the Last Trial by Jury for Atheism":—

WILLIAM JOHN BIRCH, M.A.,  
Of New Inn Hall, Oxon.,  
Who in the "evil days" of Free Discussion  
Was its courageous and Liberal Defender ;  
And was first to help us  
*When a Friend is twice a Friend—*  
When we were unknown and struggling.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### *WHAT HAPPENED AFTER IMPRISONMENT.*

(1843-80.)

AFTER the affair with Mr. Justice Erskine, I could not retire from public advocacy. I should have been thought a coward ; my treatment would have been tried on others ; many would have been discouraged if I had shown signs of giving way, and the enemies of free opinion would have triumphed and grown insolent. During my imprisonment it was suggested to me by the chaplain that I might do better by accepting for myself a situation as master of a school in which my wife could be appointed mistress, and this could be arranged if I would desist from the advocacy on which I had embarked. That doleful ending was not to my mind. It was also suggested to me that I might free myself by petition and submission. Not only would I not do it, but I gave notice to my friends that I should count it as an outrage if any one did it in my name, or on my behalf. My wife would have resented it had I done it on her account. So when I was free I took the warpath again.

To compare a small affair with great ones, had I been, like Savonarola or Bruno, subjected to torture and fire, I know not how I should have behaved, for I have no taste for rack or torch. But such trouble as can now befall a wilful person—imprisonment, darkness, privation, cold, and insult—is supportable, though death may come that way.

Wherever I was advertised to lecture, some enthusiasts who engaged me described me as one who had been delivered by the spiritual police to the "secular arm." I never objected to this, because it was defiance—but it was not profit. As soon as I could get means of travelling after my liberation, I went down

to Cheltenham and repeated the words which led to my sojourn at Gloucester, on the ground that I had been called upon to pay a certain price for free speech, and that, as I had paid the price, I had purchased the right. This was not good law, but it was good defiance, and that was what I meant.

One effect of the reputation of having been imprisoned appeared in 1846 where it was least to be expected. Mr. William Ellis, a great friend and admirer of Mr. J. S. Mill, founded some secular schools in London, and defrayed their expenses himself. One was intended for the National Hall, Holborn. Mr. William Lovett was secretary of the proposed school, as he was of the committee of the National Hall. He had been imprisoned himself two years in Warwick Gaol for political reasons. Francis Place was one of the consulting authorities of the intended school. I offered myself for the office of teacher with his consent. Mr. Lovett, the secretary, to whom I wrote upon the subject, never replied to any communication I made to him. When, after some months, the matter was brought to his notice, he said "he understood Mr. Place would reply to my letters." But Mr. Place had never received them. Mr. C. D. Collet and Mr. Serjeant Parry, members of the committee, complained of Mr. Lovett's conduct. Mr. Lovett was employed by Mr. Ellis to conduct one of his secular schools, and he had an income from Mr. Ellis as long as he lived. But so strong was his prejudice against me, who had been imprisoned for heresy, that he who had been incarcerated for sedition was unable to be civil to me. I told him that, if it should appear to the promoters of the school that my being a teacher of it would be detrimental, I should myself object to my own appointment. Heresy in theology proved a much more serious thing than heresy in politics; and that avenue of employment was closed.

At one time a publisher who had known me as a social advocate conceded me employment in his house. This being a friendly act, my first thought was what would happen to him if I went. I thought in the interests of my employer that I should always be called by a writing name I had elsewhere used, to neutralize my identity where, if obtruded, the consequence would fall upon others. My own name would be sure to incite inquiries.



Mr. Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, gave to an Irish journalist of mark in New York (Thomas Ainge Devyr, before named) a letter of introduction to me. I granted him writing quarters in my publishing house in Fleet Street, and was at willing trouble to be of service to him. On his return to America he wrote a singular paper, setting forth the causes in operation, which would lead to war before long on the question of slavery. This was three years before the war broke out, and when Devyr's calculations were published neither the journalists of England nor those of America believed that war was coming. When it came, three years later, I put this prediction in the hands of several members of Parliament in this country, as an instance of the political foresight of my friend. The paper consisted of several columns. It happened that I never read more than two, and their purport being striking, I lent the paper to valued friends, thinking the whole of it was of the nature of the part I had read. Some years after, curiosity led me to peruse the whole, when I found that it contained indignant reproaches of my friend, Horace Greeley, for having given a letter of introduction to me, as, I being a person well known to hold theological opinions not at all in request, his acquaintance with me was a disadvantage to him; and more to the same uncomplimentary effect. Thus had I been circulating among my public friends this disparaging account of myself. My object was to exalt the reputation of my visitor for political sagacity; all the while I was doing my best to destroy any social reputation I might have. This was another instance in which my residence at Gloucester gave me a profitless distinction; it lent to me a luminosity of a sulphurous kind, which caused me to be distinguished in a crowd.

Some years later Mr. Devyr wrote to me soliciting some friendly offices at my hands, which I had the pleasure to perform, as I had great regard for him on account of perilous services he had rendered to Ireland. But I now took the precaution of reading all through his communications before they passed from my hands. When I visited New York some twenty years later, my ambiguous visitor at Fleet Street appeared on a public platform at Cooper Union, and claimed to bear his testimony in my honour for the advantage to him of the courtesy and kindness I had shown him when he was a

stranger in London. It was quite an unexpected incident. He had become grateful for what he had been ungrateful.

Sometimes, when engaged to deliver co-operative lectures, an excited grocer would write a letter to a paper in the town asking if I was not the same person who had given trouble to the saints on a certain occasion. My friends who engaged me did not care for this, but feared it might harm the society—I was engaged no more. This sort of thing only excites curiosity now, and increases an audience. It excited terror then.

The incident to be related in the chapter on W. E. Forster would never have occurred but for my heretical reputation ; nor would the proposal of certain of the Oddfellows to deprive me of the prizes awarded to me have been made. It was brought against the Society for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge that I reported in the *Reasoner* proceedings of Mr. Collet, the secretary, Mr. Serle, who wrote under the name of "Caustic" in the *Weekly Dispatch*, made this charge. That most Radical paper was against the Repeal.

When Garibaldi was at Brooke House, I drove nine miles across the Isle of Wight to a telegraph station, that information might reach a London daily, at the request of their reporter, who could not get the news. I paid the expense of the telegrams as well as the charge for the vehicle. Telegrams making a mere paragraph were several shillings then. I was refused any payment at the office, though my communication was used. It was not prudent of me to complain, as my secular wilfulness was remembered and marred my eligibility for engagements. Sometimes I contributed to papers without my work being recognized or paid for, or when paid for I was often precluded from owning to my own articles if I was asked the question, lest the knowledge should damage the paper. In some instances, I should certainly have been on the staff of public journals but for my heretical disqualification. The editor was not afraid, but he was afraid lest other people should be afraid. The only instance to the contrary in those days was the proprietor of the *Newcastle Chronicle*, who was never afraid of anything or anybody, so far as I could discover.\*

Sometimes my books were not reviewed because it was not

\* These Chapters, save a few additional ones, are reprinted from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

to the editor's interest to mention my name ; sometimes, as in the *Quarterly Review*, they were reviewed without my name as author ; six other books were reviewed at the same time, and as the omission of my name looked singular, the editor struck out their names, and seven books without authors were duly reviewed. Sometimes my books were reprinted, as in Paisley, without the name of the writer ; sometimes, as in America, " Public Speaking and Debate " was reprinted with the name of a minister on the title-page, and a preface by the reverend gentleman, that the reader might have instruction without the danger of knowing to whom he owed it. Many hours' amusement all this consideration afforded me ; and made me recall the lines—

" Yes, I am proud, and must be proud to see  
Men, not afraid of God, afraid of me."

When I first went out in defence of reason and freedom as against dogma and restriction, experience taught me that I was shutting myself out from opportunities of advantage open to others, and I felt neither surprise nor regret when the evil days came. As I have said already, imprisonment was never to my taste. I never wished it : I never sought it—I never feared it. I have exposed myself to it many times since, and would do it again now for a just principle ; but no man will persuade me that persecution is an advantage to any cause or any person. But it is a great dignity when incurred from a sense of duty or resistance to dishonour. I neither provoked persecution nor shrank from it. Though no one else desired freedom, it is enough for me that I desire it ; I would maintain the conflict for it as best I could, though no one else cared about it ; and, as I chose to make the purchase, I do not higggle about the price. Tyranny has its soldiers ; and why not freedom ? While thousands daily perish at the shrine of vice, of vanity, and of passion, what is the pain of a sacrifice now and then for a public principle ?

Innovation in theology is more serious than innovation in politics. Politicians are always dealing with new facts ; and affairs of years ago are soon swept out of memory by the current of new interests. Political parties unpopular a few years ago may be in ascendency to-day, and sedition in the past becomes

patriotism in the present. But in ecclesiasticism all is different. The Church forgets no offence against it, and rarely forgives it. The part taken in Liberal policy by the great statesmen of France and England at the end of the last century none but historical students remember ; but every fool in the streets, in every town and village, knows that Voltaire and Paine were against the priests. Theology is always in power. The party of reason is always in a minority, and a prisoner for heresy is always under condemnation, though his sentence may have long since expired. Indeed, instead of ceasing at his death, it increases. Charges he might answer if living no one answers for him, since he would himself be suspected who did so.

Experience convinced me of one thing. A man need not, like Crusoe, betake himself to the peril of the sea to fall upon a desert island. Any one of strong individual views soon finds himself upon one at home. Insight of things not perceived by your fellows and which they do not wish to see, but which you insist upon making known, create a desert island around you before you are aware of it, and you find yourself dwelling with far-off neighbours. Unknown truth is to the ignorant an unknown terror—a terror because the nature of the new idea is unknown in its relations to the familiar. The propagandist is regarded as the Brahmin regarded the microscope—not as making evident living creatures before unperceived, but as creating the new objects revealed. When new truth is regarded as a heresy, he who maintains it may be glad if his fate is to be only deserted, and not driven out, like the passenger in a plague ship, to perish in the loneliness of the ocean. But too much is not to be made of the disadvantages of taking sides. All opinion has its penalties. Nor would those I have cited be worth recounting, except to show those who seek truth or usefulness, that inconvenience may arise ; and that being forewarned, they may not be discouraged by surprise, and look back.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *A REMARKABLE COUNSELLOR OF PROPAGANDISTS.*

(1843-55.)

IN my time I have known many generous lawyers, but no one who took so wide an interest in freedom of opinion, in political and social progress, or who was the counsellor of so many publicists, who as the writer of this chapter did, by opinionative wilfulness got themselves into unforeseen trouble.

Mr. William Henry Ashurst was an eminent City solicitor of London. He was a colleague of Sir Rowland Hill, and was counted the second person to whom the success of the Penny Postage was due. He was the trusted legal adviser of Robert Owen. He held Owen's principle—that human circumstance had a controlling influence on human action. When called upon professionally to decide whether a servant guilty of defalcation should be prosecuted, he would cause inquiry to be made as to whether poverty, or the pressure of a family beyond means of support, or strong temptation had overcome natural honesty—showing that the exercise of mercy might afford an opportunity for recovering character. Thus he saved many from transportation and ruin. Where a defaulter was without moral principle, he left him to the law. Thus an intelligent principle of compassion, not based on sentiment or on Biblical authority, but upon human considerations, rescued many who would otherwise have been lost.

Under the name of "Edward Search," Mr. Ashurst was a frequent writer in the Boston *Liberator* of Lloyd Garrison, assisting him by counsel, pen, and purse in the battle for negro freedom. Publicists in England and in other nations brought

into conflict with the law, in endeavours to extend the limits of freedom in politics or opinion, often found their way to Mr. Ashurst, whose advice and aid were always at their command. Thus, when my trial in Gloucester befell me, I was introduced to him, and he was my friend all his days. Mr. John Morris, who succeeded to the business, and Mr. Shaen, were trained in Mr. Ashurst's office, both became distinguished solicitors, and alike rendered the same generous counsel to propagandists who had trouble with authority. Mr. Ashurst's son, William Henry, afterwards solicitor to the Post Office, followed in the discerning and merciful steps of his father. Mr. Ashurst had in his own mind the intellectual freedom he defended for others. He believed in the wise maxim of Lucretia Mott, whom he greatly esteemed—"Truth for Authority, not Authority for Truth."

Believing that social ideas would one day largely occupy the attention of society, Mr. Ashurst bought, in 1849, a paper entitled *The Spirit of the Age*, which had been projected by Robert Buchanan, father of the present poet. The paper was about to cease, and the purchase money given for it was of the nature of a gift in acknowledgment of services the conductors had otherwise rendered to social progress. For three months they were retained upon the paper, out of consideration to them, with power to have articles of their own inserted. I received the appointment of editor. My advice was in favour of paying the former conductors the salaries accorded them, and commencing the paper on the new lines of studious "fairness towards the middle and the industrious class," whom it was designed to influence or benefit. Mazzini had consented to write; so had one who afterwards became a Cabinet Minister, two members of the French Provisional Government, and others whose names would have given distinction to the paper, which was intended to be what *The Leader* afterwards was.

In the meantime, the retained contributors, who had acquired class anger in many social conflicts, wrote in hostility to the dispassionate views of the new proprietor. In the last number over which they could exercise the right of insertion, they announced a new paper to be started by themselves. As public support was then very limited, there was little prospect of establishing *The Spirit of the Age*, with a rival journal arising as it were out of itself. I therefore advised Mr. Ashurst that

he would lose all further money which he intended to devote to the enterprise, and that he had better consider the £600 he had already expended as wholly lost. Thus I terminated my own appointment more valued by me than any other which had then been accorded me.

Mr. Ashurst wrote a final notice which was expressed with force and dignity, saying, "It is due to our readers to inform them that with this number *The Spirit of the Age* ceases. He who took the paper and defrayed its entire liabilities has since sustained it, to see whether an addition of quantity, more care in its superintendence, and a well considered devotion to the interests of those whose views it was intended to advance, would obtain for it that support which would give it an independent existence. The experiment would have been continued longer, money not being essentially important; but it appears that, unless the paper is conducted in the same tone and style under which it arrived at death's door, it will not be satisfactory to those who had originally issued it, and who had sought our aid to prevent its termination. Our own views are that just ends should be sought, and ought to be sought by peaceable means. All subscribers who have paid in advance for copies will have returned to them the residue due to them."

The discontinuance of this journal was an advantage to those who had projected a rival paper, as it left the field clear for them. They, however, regarded the advice I had given which led to the cessation of *The Spirit of the Age* as implied censure upon them, which indeed it was. Thus, without deserving it, I incurred their dislike, and the hostility and disparagement by the principal of them, Mr. Lloyd Jones, were protracted through thirty-four years.

Mr. Ashurst was a shrewd judge of efficiency. To the writer of the foreign summary of *The Spirit of the Age*, in which Mr. Ashurst observed vacancies where facts were wanting, he said, "How do you write your summary—from notes?" The reply was, "Oh no, I do not need to do that. I write from memory of the week's news." Mr. Ashurst answered, "The plan has the advantage of saving you the remorse of knowing what you omit."

While I was responsible for *The Spirit of the Age*, I devised a tabular slip of paper on which appeared the number printed,

the number sold, the sum received for papers, the sum received for advertisements, cost of paper, weekly average of rent, taxes, and office expenses, the amount paid for salaries and contributions ; total outlay and total loss or gain. This statement I delivered every Saturday to Mr. Ashurst, that he might have at a glance true knowledge of the fortunes of his enterprise. It was a rule in my mind to do what was just, and to take care that others to whom I was answerable saw that I did it, and had not the trouble of inquiring for their own satisfaction. This seemed to me to be due towards those who trusted me.

In many ways I was indebted to Mr. Ashurst's friendship. Desiring to attend lectures at the London University, impossible to me with my means, he made me a loan of £50 to enable me to do it. A year or two afterwards I repaid him by instalments which seemed unexpected to him, as though his experience had not lain much in that way. He was pleased, however, more for my sake than his own. There was no other idea in my mind than that of repaying him. It was a greater gratification to return the loan than to receive it. Upon paying him the last amount he sent me to his cashier, Mr. Mayer, to get the repayment recorded in his ledger, lest it might appear hereafter as still due. This really happened. Mr. Mayer deferred and neglected to make the entry, and after Mr. Ashurst's decease it was mentioned to me that the amount appeared as still owing. The receipt given me by Mr. Ashurst I was then unable to find, and I was told not to trouble about it, as my word was sufficient. Some years later the receipt turned up, and was sent to the family who had so handsomely accepted my word. This was resented as amounting to distrust of their assurance. That was not so. Their word was the same to me as a new receipt, but it was simply following the rule I observed with Mr. Ashurst of making it clear on the first opportunity that the fact corresponded with my word.

When the *Leader* newspaper company was being formed, a provisional meeting was held at the Whittington Club. Mr. Ashurst, who took shares in the paper, attended the meeting. Quite unforeseen by me, he said "he had come to meet the promoters for the purpose of saying that he understood that Mr. Holyoake was to be the manager of the paper. He therefore wished to say that he had held a similar appointment under

him, and had saved him a thousand pounds by his advice, when it was to his interest that he (Mr. Ashurst) should go on expending the money, and that Mr. Holyoake was the only person connected with the ink pot, with whom he had had relations, who had repaid him when he had taken a pecuniary interest in his affairs."

This speech took me very much by surprise. I can see now, writing forty years later, that I ought at once to have risen and thanked Mr. Ashurst for his generous tribute, of which I knew nothing beforehand. That certainly is not "presence of mind" which occurs to you forty years after the event. I was confused, and said nothing. Mr. Thornton Hunt, with his quick kindness, saw the reason of my silence, and he and Mr. Lewes made acknowledgments for me in terms which placed me under obligations to them for their courtesy and confidence. Thus it was not always a disadvantage to me to have done what I conceived to be right without considering whether it was for or against my interest to do it.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### *RICHARD CARLILE THE PUBLISHER.*

(1843.)

OF two men who were for a time contemporaneous—both famous in a different way, both impassable in their opinions—one was English in everything, the other Scotch in everything—one was Richard Carlile, the other Thomas Carlyle.

Richard Carlile was best known to me. It was in 1841, on my first Sunday in London, that I first met him. It was on one of the few days allowed me to prepare for my trial at Gloucester. As I was passing Blackfriars Bridge at two o'clock in the afternoon, I saw approaching a short, thick-set gentleman, with piercing eyes and pleasant though resolute expression of countenance. The beams of the sun, then fiercely descending, lent animation to his features. The friend with me stopped and introduced me to Richard Carlile. He greeted me with many friendly words of commendation, which I valued as coming from a veteran prisoner for opinion to one who had scarcely entered the ranks. He told me he had to speak that night at the Hall of Science in the City Road, a building constructed in a waggon yard, near the Bunhill Fields Cemetery. The hall was put up by Mr. Mordan, the well-known inventor of the gold pen, in order that Rowland Detrosier might speak there. Carlile said he was to lecture upon "The New Scientific Interpretation of the Scripture," and expressed a wish that I should take part in the discussion thereon—which I did, as is related in the chapter on the "Origin of Secularism."

It was an additional attraction to me to go to the Hall of Science, as I should see the place in which Detrosier lectured,

and speak myself there. Rowland Detrosier was dead then. He was a foundling, bearing his mother's French name, and was educated in a Manchester Benevolent Vegetarian Institution, where he came to be a kind of preacher, and astonished, not only his congregation, but the city, by taking geological stones into the pulpit and telling their story to his hearers. Few people in those days knew or believed that stones had a story to tell. Detrosier had French vivacity and a voice like Lord Brougham's. An address which he delivered on the subject of the "Elevation of the Working Class," was printed by John Cleave in London, and became as famous as Dr. Channing's address on a similar subject. This led to his being invited to London by the political reformers of that day. John Stuart Mill took great interest in him, and after his death contributed to the support of his widow for many years. Detrosier died in a little street off Seymour Street, the first as you turn out of Euston Road. The cause of his death was a chill taken by riding on an omnibus from Whitechapel, after lecturing in a heated room. I first read of his death in the *Argus* of Birmingham, published by Mr. Allday, of whom I have made mention. Subscriptions were asked for Detrosier's family. I sent tenpence, the whole contents of a little copper money box which I had made myself. This was my first public subscription. The story of Detrosier's career and singular ability fascinated me, and having a little brother born at that time requiring a name, I persuaded my mother to call him Rowland. She gave him the name of Walter Rowland. She had a suspicion of outlandish names, and put Walter before it to civilize it.

When my trial came on, Mr. Carlile came down to Gloucester and remained all the ten days the assizes lasted ; he was in court with me to counsel me in my defence, and was, as I have said, my first visitor after the sentence. In one of the last articles he published in the *Warrior*, he wrote—"I was present in the court to witness the trial of George Jacob Holyoake. I heard Wooller and Hone defend themselves successfully in 1817 ; but I would prefer to be declared guilty with Holyoake to being acquitted on the ground of Wooller and Hone."

Before my liberation in 1842 Richard Carlile was dead.

Following the example of Jeremy Bentham, Carlile left his body for dissection, and Mr. Lawrence, the eminent surgeon, was the operator. Mr. Lawrence had published a volume of "Lectures on Man" which caused him for a time to be regarded as of Carlile's way of thinking. They contained some materialistic passages which would excite no interest in these days, biological science having advanced far beyond Lawrence; but when the "Lectures" appeared they were regarded as so serious that the author had to recant them. There is no reason to suppose, any more than in the case of Galileo, that the recanter's opinions were changed.

In the days of Bentham, and long after, there was such ignorant prejudice against dissection that "subjects" could not be obtained for the uses of surgical science. This could only be overcome by gentlemen leaving their bodies for dissection. Jeremy Bentham, Richard Carlile, and other distinguished freethinkers ordered their bodies to be given for that purpose. Harriet Martineau gave similar directions with regard to her remains. There is no instance of any distinguished Christian who did this. This generous and courageous devotion to science, though creditable to freethinkers, was a great disadvantage to their cause, and increased the public prejudice against them.

Carlile, like Bunyan, was a tinker. He came to London when a young man, and followed his trade for several years. He had not Bunyan's genius, but he had his courage, and braved imprisonment and endured it with as much heroism as the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

In days when gentlemen were transported for having in their possession Paine's "Age of Reason," Carlile published editions of his works. He was imprisoned himself altogether nine years and three months—his wife was imprisoned also—more than one hundred and fifty of his shopmen were at various times imprisoned. He not only resisted the fetters upon the press, but inspired others to resist. He wrote heretical books, delivered lectures, and by his pen, his speech, and in his person maintained the conflict, until he established a free press. Like Paine, recognition and credit have never been given Carlile because of his heretical sentiments. The enlargement of freedom has always been due to heretics who have been un-

requited during their day and defamed when dead. No publisher in any country ever incurred so much peril to free the press as Richard Carlile. Every British bookseller has profited by his intrepidity and endurance. Speculations of philosophy and science, which are now part of the common intelligence, power, and profit, would have been stifled to this day but for him.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### *THOMAS CARLYLE THE THINKER.*

(1843.)

THE two men whose names sound alike were an instructive contrast. Richard Carlile was all for freedom—Thomas Carlyle was all for despotism. Carlile the publisher, was for every one thinking and speaking for himself. Carlyle the writer was for the silence of all men but himself, and for the uninformed many submitting themselves to the imperious dominion of the wise. Carlyle felt tenderness and taught contempt for the people. He described them as consisting of "thirty millions, mostly fools," reserving himself as the only well-ascertained exception. In an age when all power was in the hands of the insolent classes he preached the worship of force and ferocity. He no doubt intended that their exercise should be directed against imposture and in favour of truth and justice, but he did not make it sufficiently clear; whereas he should have made the qualification very plain. He applauded Governor Eyre of Jamaica, who added pianoforte wire to the cats with which he flogged working men and women—an act more likely to find imitators than Carlyle's nobler advice to practise truth and industry. Men in the negro condition, black and white, may one day have their turn of power, when Carlyle's ferocious approval of Eyreism will invigorate many a cat and sharpen many a knife for use on respectable backs and throats—unless they learn from other teachers that firmness and clemency alone bring security. I sent Mr. Carlyle word that he was nurturing dynamiters.

In politics his influence has been wholly disastrous. On

industry his teachings have been less malign. His theory of the Organization of Labour has given us State Socialists ; but he has been the friend of the industrious by exalting the dignity of labour and inspiring it with honesty of execution. But it seemed never to occur to him that there can be no general pride in labour, nor dignity in it, until it is endowed with the right of profit in its performance.

January Searle (George Searle Phillips, who wrote under this name) told me that at a breakfast at Fryston Hall at which Carlyle was present, on my name being mentioned he observed "that was the mon who said there was no God." I had never said that, but Carlyle, though honourably scrupulous about the truth in most things, did not always regard accuracy as of consequence, even where it pleased him to pass judgment. Lord Dalling, who, having been all his life a diplomatist, might be supposed to be familiar with the purport of terms and scrupulous in their application, spoke in one of his last essays of "Thomas Paine the atheist." Had he thought it necessary to proceed upon knowledge, he would have found that Paine was not only not an atheist, but a passionate theist, who founded a Society of Theists in Paris. However, in Carlyle injustice of phrase was artistic picturesqueness rather than malevolence, and when another guest, presuming on what he had said of me, made some disparaging remark concerning me, Carlyle at once stopped him by some fierce and generous words of vindication.

Once, when in Paisley, I had read in a newspaper published there, an attack on Carlyle's opinions, in which the editor confounded his great countryman with Richard Carlile, who was an open heretic. Though complimentary to the party to which I belonged to see it assumed that we had so famous an adherent as Thomas Carlyle, it was not true, and I wrote and pointed out how different a school of religious thought the great Scotch thinker represented from that of Richard Carlile, the English Fleet Street publisher. Probably Mr. Carlyle remembered this when he defended me from conventional aspersion at Lord Houghton's breakfast table.

In what I say of Carlyle here I confine myself to his influence on politics and industry, which mainly concerns me. His personal nobility of character, as it seems to me, is beyond praise, as it is beyond dispute. His intrepid letter in

defence of Mazzini when it was a social peril to one in Carlyle's position to own himself a friend of the great insurgent Italian, was a generous act beyond the reach of common men. But Carlyle knew an honest man when he saw him, and his testimony thereto was at command, come what might. Though Carlyle was the greatest ruffian in literature since the days of Dr. Johnson, he had, like the doctor, the redeeming virtues of honesty and heroic love of truth.

When in Canada, in 1882, I visited Carlyle's sister, Mrs. Hanning, formerly Janet Carlyle, who was then residing at Hamilton in a small detached house. Quite a country garden lay in the rear, from which she gathered bright flowers for my daughter, who was with me—an act of pleasant familiar country life at home which made us forget that Niagara was hard by. Soon after Mrs. Hanning's marriage, which took place near Manchester, England, she emigrated to Canada with her husband. Since her husband's death she had lived alone where we found her, self-dependent in a house "self-contained," as they say in her own country, keeping no servant. Since that visit she has died. She was tall, with decision of manner, and very much resembling in features her illustrious brother. She had a full-length portrait of him, in which he appears reclining against a wall, in a careless manner, with hat in hand—a sketch by Count d'Orsay. Carlyle was quite a young man then. She had also a book-case filled with the costliest editions of her brother's works, which he had sent her from time to time. All his volumes on Cromwell and Frederick the Great were there, and his last book on John Knox. They all bore affectionate inscriptions written by himself. One book which interested me was one given by Mrs. Carlyle to Mrs. Hanning. It was when she was living near Manchester. It bore the inscription, "To Janet Carlyle, with Jane Welsh Carlyle's affectionate regards. Comely Bank, January 10, 1827." It was not long after her own marriage to Carlyle, and apparently she had not anything more costly to send as a memorial of her having entered the family. The book was one of her earlier school books, being a volume of examples in eloquence and composition of the last century—a book which happily had not influenced her own style. That was natural, bright, and elastic, beyond anything I observed in the book, which bore an earlier

inscription than the one I have quoted, namely, "Jean Welsh, 1806," written with attempts at ornament, and the letters dotted round as a child writes its name for the first time. The book was probably sent as a memento of regard, and might have been intrinsically interesting to Miss Janet, and no doubt was, since she had preserved it to that day.

Speaking of Mr. Froude's account of her brother, which was then the talk of America, as it was of England, she said, "Some of my family have sent me a paper wishing me to sign it as objecting to the appearance of the Froude book. I replied I did not wish to sign it." This was said with true Scotch sagacity and prudence. She did not intend to sign it; but she did not offend any one by saying she would not, contenting herself with saying she "did not wish" to sign it—which still left the door open, should she see reason to do it. She added, "Mr. Froude was a friend of my brother, and he whom my brother trusted I think the family should trust. Mr. Froude had no doubt said the thing that was." And then, drawing herself up with a gesture of dignity, she said, "My brother was always for the truth, and so am I,"—a declaration which had the true Carlylean ring in it.

It was Mrs. Carlyle's letters which, being published, had caused the trouble. Carlyle had shown his noble sense of justice by desiring their publication, although he knew the impression they would make would be against himself. I remarked to Mr. Froude one day, when he did me the honour to call upon me, that to desire to publish her letters was in Carlyle an act of justice to her memory. "Yes," answered the great historian, "but what man thinks of doing justice to his wife?" The singular thing is that Mr. Froude, who published these works in obedience to Carlyle's wish, who desired him as his friend to do it, has been censured, as though he had been the author of the letters. It was noble of Mr. Froude to incur all this censure himself through fidelity to his friend, and it seems to me an act of justice to record that Carlyle's sister had honour in her heart for Mr. Froude.

A Spanish scholar left Mr. Carlyle a thousand pounds, who, remembering that the brother of the donor had suffered some reverses, Mr. Carlyle inquired whether he had become free of them, otherwise, if the money would be useful to him, he, the

legatee, desired to place it at his disposal, as he (Mr. Carlyle) was free from prospect of reverse, and he should remember his friend all the same for his generous regard of him. This act implied a nature of natural nobleness. It is common to find men who have a biting tongue, which they cannot restrain, yet possessed of instinctive tenderness and generosity.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### *A VISIT TO THE LAST COMMUNITY.*

(1843.)

WITHIN sixty years there have been four communities in England—Orbiston, Motherwell, Manea Fen, and Queenwood. The promoters were not merely Socialists, they were Communists. As this is still a name of terror, it will interest many readers to have a glimpse of the last place where they had a local habitation and a name.

Cobden, in affairs of trade or peace, had good discernment. In social aims, with which he had little sympathy, he was indiscriminating. In his day communism was a term of alarm in the mind of ignorance, and was exaggerated by interest, which knew better. Though before 1840 there existed community societies, the persons belonging to them were spoken of as "members of the community society," not communists. Communism was a Continental term, scarcely recognized or used in England. Mr. Cobden used it as a term of social spoliation. An English community, as the followers of Robert Owen understood it, was a self-supporting industrial city, distinguished by common labour, common property, and common means of intelligence and recreation. These communal cities were to be examples of industrialism freed from competition. In the communal life an ethical character was to be formed in the young and impressed upon adults, and all assured education, leisure, and ultimate competence. As this was the first systematized social conception in which I believed, and believe no less in it still, it is relevant for me to give some account of the last English attempt to realize it in my time.

On Monday morning, October 14, 1843, I "wended my way," as the novelists say, down by Parliament House, over Vauxhall Bridge, on my visit to Harmony Hall. At the Nine Elms terminus I demanded a ticket for Nine Mile Water, Harmony Hall. "Oh," said the official in the railway office, "you must take a ticket to Farnborough! that's the station." Taking it for granted that he knew, in five minutes I was on my way to Farnborough, the rain coming down like a workman too late for the factory bell, the wind blowing with preternatural velocity. In due time I alighted at Farnborough Station, and thought, "Well, after all, Harmony Hall is not so far off as people have said," and I looked about for one of the Community vehicles. But I found myself surrounded by a crowd of Frenchmen talking with the explosiveness of volleys of musketry, and I thought, "Surely these people can't belong to Harmony Hall, unless they are the 'hired labourers,' who were then unpopular." I inquired at once for Queenwood. "Queenwood," said the marvelling superintendent, "there was a gentleman once before came here asking for that place. It is forty or fifty miles below. You had better take the next train to Winchester, and then 'inquire again!'" I had nothing to do but to turn myself to the fire and the Frenchmen, in the hopes of finding either warmth or amusement. In a few minutes I found that the Frenchmen were king's attendants waiting for the arrival of Louis Philippe and the Queen, who were expected from Windsor at one o'clock. Before long, I observed some strange-looking men darting off at all angles without any apparent reason, and pushing people about I could not tell why. But soon I discovered their movements followed on the nod and beck of a marble-eyed elderly gentleman, who was, if I mistake not, one of Sir James Graham's special commissioners, whom I saw at Gloucester Gaol, and I knew I was surrounded by the A Division of Police from Scotland Yard, who darted about at every roll of the official orbs before mentioned. I immediately called in all external signs of curiosity, and commenced to wear an entirely neutral look, by which means I noticed everybody in security. When the Royal party arrived from Windsor, even the gaping gentry of the neighbourhood were thrust to the back of the building. At every avenue policemen brandished their batons; a poor

Frenchman, looking over a gate, was rudely thrust back, and given in charge of the police; and none but officials and myself stood in the narrow passage made for their Majesties to pass. Finding me walking about the rooms, they probably regarded me as a station assistant. I therefore took a position by the side of the police, deeming that the best place for passing unsuspected, and I was right. Guizot first interested me. His half-military dress detracted from his philosophical character, but his well-moulded head and firm features, resting upon his iron-looking shoulders, gave him, though rather a short man, an appearance of majesty which none of their Majesties possessed. He looked one of the princes of what the Chambers styled the "intellectual aristocracy"—a new phrase of that time used by them. Many a Frenchman would envy me. Louis Philippe I could have shot half-a-dozen times, had I been so disposed. There was nothing inviting about him. His cheeks hung like collapsed pudding bags. The only thing to which I could compare his head was an inverted humming-top. The people of France, I learned afterwards, had nicknamed him "Louis le Poire," or the pear-headed, from the resemblance they discovered in his face and head to an inverted pear. And Paris was placarded with pictures of pears bearing his face, with the words annexed, "When the pear is rotten, it will fall," as afterwards happened.

Prince Albert had a right princely appearance. His large German eyes were singularly full and glaring. He looked as though he was well fed, and without care whence his meals came. None of these notables had I seen before. The Queen I had not seen since she was a girl, and I wondered how the cooped-up, swaddled thing I saw in Birmingham when she was eleven years old, had become so graceful a young woman. I was agreeably surprised at her. The breezes of Blair Athol had left her quite blooming, and her pretty Saxon-looking face, beaming both with maternal affection and thought, quite prepossessed me in her favour. I do but record my impressions at the time. The Royal party passed on to Gosport, for Louis Philippe was going home, having been on a visit to our Court.

About three o'clock I was again on the line making another attempt to get to Harmony Hall. How the wind blows on the

Southampton railway over its uncovered carriages ! Even on the Brighton line, then and long after, third-class passengers made the journey in open trucks, where a mother could ill-protect her child from the rain, and with difficulty prevent it from being blown away. Who travel to Hants in October weather should tie caps upon their heads and their heads on their shoulders. My cap, which had seen some service, having had six months' imprisonment, was almost blown into its original fleece, and was near regaining its first abode on the backs of the neighbouring sheep. When I reached Winchester it was half-past four o'clock, and Stockbridge was nine miles off. No conveyance being procurable, and the rain abating, I walked the distance.

At last, regular Egyptian darkness—such as could be felt—set in, but where Stockbridge lay, whether near or far, on hill or in hollow, I knew not. At last, feeling my way with my umbrella, I ran against something that proved to be a ploughman, from whom I learned that I was on the verge of the village, that I must “turn by the Ship, ask for the Queen's Head, and tell Stone that I was one of the Zozialites,” and I would be all right. There I found a pretty, kind creature of a landlady, and by half-past seven I was engaged with toast and tea, and listening to the song of one of those organized fungi which seem to vegetate about Stockbridge in the shape of farm labourers.

In those days there were no village reading-rooms. Hetherington's *Poor Man's Guardian* had never been heard of in Stockbridge. Newspapers were then sixpence and ninepence each, and were seen only by the squire or the clergyman, who never lent them to the cottagers. No union of agricultural labourers was thought of. The company I was in reached the highest point of their existence with a mug of beer and a song. There was no assembly in the Queen's Head of long pipes and village philosophers such as George Eliot has depicted in “*Silas Marner*.” One of the Stockbridge zoophytes was singing, for the amusement of his companions, a song, of which the best applauded couplet was—

If I had a wife wot blowed me up,  
I'd get a gal and make her jalus."

Had these lines come upon them with the novelty of originality, the delight they caused could not have been more spontaneous. They quite brought down the tap-room. The landlady smiled from the bar window, partly in applause of the singer and partly to encourage business. This was the high water mark of intellectuality to which the parson and the squire had brought the farm labourers of Stockbridge.

The next morning I set out for Queenwood. It rained then as in the days of Noah. My directions were "to pass through the village, and, at a mile and half onwards, to turn off to the left by a gentleman's house, which would lead me (somehow) to Broughton." I was now fairly in the land of flint and chalk. Everywhere lay flanks of earth, dressed in nature's shabbiest attire—not unlike a man in threadbare hose, and the mounds of white chalk, peeping up here and there, presented the picture of nature out at the elbows. When high on the road that lay "by the gentleman's house," I asked my way of an old villager, who, unfortunately for me, "knew the road well." He sent me along this field, over that, by a stile "which I should be sure to see" (but be sure not to know), and after turning here, and turning there, I should come out (somewhere) in Broughton.

Reader, beware of one who knows the way. Were I about to be hanged (that being the time when persons who never had any wisdom commence to give important advice) the first thing I should warn young persons against would be those people who "know the way." Many a week I have walked five times farther than the real way through following the directions of people who sent me the "nearest" way. When a stranger asks his road, instead of being directed straightforward through highways or well-known streets, which he could not miss, somebody who knows all the lanes and by-ways, courts and alleys, will send him through them. The moment a stranger enters the first of these, he knows not where he is, and has to spend more time in making inquiries than would take him ten times the actual distance. Some plain-minded person, who knows little about a place, is the man for a guide. In Bristol, when I went in 1841 to visit Charles Southwell, then in prison there for wounding what Lord Salisbury would call the "grotesque susceptibilities" of

Sir Charles Weatherell, I had the good fortune to be taken to Bristol Bridge. This became my centre of transit. Everywhere I went I started from Bristol Bridge. I was never so happy in any town. In London, though always being directed "the nearest way," I am sure I have walked a thousand unnecessary miles.

After a time, I discovered the road I had left, which soon brought me to Broughton, a pleasant village to look at ; but all its pleasantness was outside. It was plain and dull enough within. But as it was the first relief from barrenness and stones, one was glad to see it. About a mile through it, over a chalk hill, is the next road to be taken, and as the traveller descends the hill's brow, he comes suddenly upon Harmony Hall—an entirely respectable-looking building, half red, half blue, a compound of brick and slate of oblong shape, with two spires in front, and two glass chimneys, apparently intended to let people see the smoke come up ; but further examination tells you they are lanterns over the corridors leading to the dormitories. "C. M. 1841," are observable at one end of the building, which informed me, for the first time, that the Millennium had commenced three years ago.

Verdure and beauty first make their appearance in the neighbourhood of the Hall. Around pleasant prospects arise. But it was a place to look at rather than to live on. The soil had been made productive at great expense ; but the flints which covered the land pointed out the place as one intended by nature, not for a colony of Socialists, but for a colony of gunsmiths, who, before percussion caps came up, might have made their fortunes there.

No devisers are perfect all at once, even in community making, and the site chosen for it in Hampshire, remote from any seat of manufacture or of commerce, was a disadvantage. The quality of the soil was also against the success of the agricultural community. Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, being in friendly relation with Robert Owen, was a reason why that site was chosen. Indeed, at that time it was difficult to obtain land anywhere. A beautiful avenue was preserved upon it ; a part of the estate called Rosewood, with a sequestered building in it, was entitled to the name. Roads were laid out at great cost worthy of the Romans. An imposing hall was erected by Mr.

Hansom, the inventor of the cab which Disraeli called the gondola of London. It was built as the "new world" should be built. Forged nails, not machine-made nails, were used in fixing lath and plank. The parts out of sight were as honestly done as those in sight. There was nothing mean about the place. The lower rooms had a costly range of windows, the walls were tastefully panelled, the sides of the room were ribbed with mahogany, and all the tables, neither few nor small, were of the same costly material. The place served as a dining-room when I was there. The kitchen had hardly a rival in London for its completeness. So much was expended in this way (£30,000 altogether), that there was insufficient to put into cultivation the Little and Great Bentley farms. It is due to Mr. Owen to state that he never approved of the attempt to establish a community with the insufficient capital then at command. Mr. Galpin, a banker at Salisbury, had subscribed £8,000 or more, Mr. William Pare £5,000. Mr. Frederick Bate put in £14,000, his total fortune bequeathed to him. Half a million of money was necessary to complete the community on the scale on which the board of directors commenced. The administration being democratic, there was no concentration of authority, so indispensable until success had repaid the capitalists. The arrears of rent accumulated, which the profit from the farms was insufficient to meet. The three trustees who were responsible, evicted, in the Irish fashion, the governor and his family, who encamped in the lanes for some days. The trustees then let the estate to George Edmondson, a Quaker and famous Yorkshire educator. It then became Queenwood College, as it is still known. Professor Tyndall was one of the teachers of science there. In a few years £11,000 of profit accumulated, which Lord Romilly, on the suit of Mr. Pare, myself, and others, ordered to be distributed among the principal shareholders, and the place to be sold and the proceeds further divided. Nothing came to the smaller community shareholders, whom I represented. It was clear that this project under purely commercial management might have paid as a social university, and ultimately as an agricultural settlement. Had it not been denounced by the clergy and the Bishop of Exeter, it is probable that Mr. Owen's great influence had obtained capital sufficient to establish an industrial city. Many independent families

contemplated going to reside there, the rent of whose tenements would have made the place prosperous. It was a satisfaction at last to see a noble college established there, in which students were educated in the arts of industry as well as in science and classical literature, which had never been united on so large a scale elsewhere in England. It was one part of the community scheme.

Thus ended the last of the English communities. Proud efforts were made for its success—noble sacrifices on the part of hundreds of working men were made, ungrudgingly and unrepiningly, although all the savings of their lifetime were lost in it. After lectures in the provinces, to this day grey-headed old men and women oft come to me recalling their sacrifices, which they never regret, and still believe they were not made in vain. The intelligent poor in our chief cities were animated with hope when "community" was named. Toil-worn men at the anvil, at the loom, and in the mine, regarded it as opening to them a way to industrial independence out of the otherwise pathless desert of their lives.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### *STORY OF THE ODDFELLOWS PRIZE LECTURES.*

(1845-6.)

THESE chapters appear in general chronological order ; though it is difficult to think over your life in strict consecutiveness of detail. Sometimes incidents come back to the mind which were as much out of sight as though they had emigrated. If a story has interest in itself, and it is apparent when its incidents did occur, the reader is commonly content.

In my youth I had a moderate faculty of memory, which I endeavoured to improve after the manner suggested by Jacotot, who had fascinated me. Taking Pope's "Essay on Man," I learned the two first lines, next day two more, always repeating the lines learned. Thus at the end of a year I could repeat 730 lines ; at the end of the second year I could repeat 1,460. Then the time required to repeat 1,460 lines, with the addition of new lines each morning, obliged me to desist. This daily use of memory no doubt was an advantage to me when I came to deliver lectures. Though I could not always foresee what I should say when I began to speak, I could always tell what I had said when I had spoken. The act of speaking in public fixed the words in my mind as though they were palpable in the air before me. For six months or more after my speech in the Court at Gloucester, I could repeat all I said, though I spoke upwards of nine hours. To this day I remember where I was, in what town, in what place, in what house, or at what exact spot, when a particular thought first entered my mind. It is far from my intention to convey the impression that everything I relate is errorless, unless I have been able to

verify it, for many details of affairs must have passed from my memory. Yet to mean to be right, and to take trouble to be right, is all a narrator can do for the reader, and the reader is not badly used who gets that.

In 1845, it fell to me to go to Glasgow. Scotland was then an unknown world to me, and I set out, as I do still on a new journey, elated and glad with curiosity, not less so then that our way was over the "dour" sea to Greenock. Our little household then included two little ones. We arrived late one evening at a temperance hotel in Liverpool, near to the dock. Temperance hotels were then penal settlements of teetotalism. A rasher of bacon (which had grown black by exposure, and dry as a slice of mummy cat), an old teapot, a chipped cup and cracked saucer, lying in a dusty window, were the outward signs and melancholy emblems of a temperance hostelry in those days.

My engagement in Glasgow was to lecture to a society of Mr. Owen's followers, which held its meetings in a pleasant little chapel in Great Hamilton Street, near Glasgow Green. I was the last of the stationed lecturers, then called "Social Missionaries."

Soon after my arrival I learned that the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows offered five prizes of £10 each for the five best lectures to be read to the members of the Order on taking successive degrees. The subjects were to be "Charity, Truth, Knowledge, Science, and Progression."

Before this time four of the degrees of the Order bore the designations of white, blue, scarlet, and gold. The ceremony of initiation included a marvellous dialogue. For instance, a candidate for the scarlet degree was asked by the Noble Grand, "Whence come you?" Not even Dr. Darwin could answer that question satisfactorily. The candidate dexterously avoided the scientific difficulty, if he was conscious of it, by answering that he came "from Mount Horeb." All the while the man had never been there, and probably did not know even its situation. The candidate was then asked, "Where are you sojourning?" and he replied, "To the inward Court of the Sanctuary." When the further question was put to him, "How will you gain your admittance?" the answer was, "By my sign and password." This does not seem sufficient had there been a real Sanctuary with an Inner Court, which the

Manchester Unity never possessed. The candidate for the gold degree was asked, "Whom do you represent?" and he replied, "The son of Onias, the High Priest, who repaired the House of God and fortified the Temple"—a very respectable delegation if accompanied by genuine credentials. When asked, "In what light will he appear in the Lodge?" he replied, with wondrous self-complacency, "As the morning star or the moon at full, I shall cheer and refresh the minds of my brethren like the sun on the Temple of the Most High or the rainbow in the heavens." These Colney Hatch answers did very well in the first half of this century, but men in the second half could never be got to give them. The Grand Master therefore advised a change.

In justice to the Order it ought to be admitted that the Old Degree Book was not all of this extraordinary complexion. There were some scattered injunctions of worldly wisdom and worth, such as—

"Be honest to yourself and connection.

Follow your occupation whereby to provide personal sufficiency and something over wherewith to relieve distress.

Be honest to your neighbour by not imposing upon or over-reaching him.

Be honest, by candidly acting towards your brother, not professing one thing and meaning another.

Be temperate in the exercise of the powers and passions of body and mind.

Be temperate in forming opinion, in expressing it, and in attempting to obtain your wishes.

You are always to recommend to equals courtesy and affability, to superiors kindness and condescension."

These were excellent Senecan sentences. Oddfellowship, like religion, can only sustain and commend itself by association with morality.

In writing the new lectures, I followed the rule I adopted early in life, of never embarrassing myself by conjecturing what other competitors would say, nor by imagining what adjudicators, or readers, or hearers would expect me to say. I simply considered what ought to be said on a given subject—what was

true and relevant as far as I could discern—and endeavoured to say it as plainly and clearly as I was able. Napoleon's one injunction to his secretaries—"Be clear"—seemed to me to include the first duty of author or speaker, and I applied it not only to the sentences, but to the writing of the Prize Lectures. I wrote them out in a plain Palmerstonian hand. Capital letters I printed, so that the beginning of sentences should be well marked. I left a broad margin, in which I wrote in red ink the subject of each paragraph. All the pages of each lecture were put into a separate coloured cover, bearing a cube in isometrical perspective, merely because it was ornamental, and mitigated the dulness of a blank cover. The motto I took was "Justice is sufficient," believing that no one ought to ask for more, and that this would be a happy world if every one got that.

The result of this was that my five books of lectures would be sure to be looked at, and when opened the red letter words in the margin enabled the appointed reader to see at once the method and quality of treatment, and be able at a glance to decide whether they were entitled to further examination. There were 79 competitors for the prizes, and if each sent in five lectures the adjudicators would have 395 to peruse. They would be sure, therefore, whatever the number, to take up first those they could read most easily.

It was probable that some competitors would send in only one or may be two lectures, such as they thought they could best write. Thus it would be difficult to combine five lectures by five different persons in one set, while one person writing the whole would give them due gradation and unity ; and unity would be essential. Therefore I sent in five.

As I was a member of the Robert Burns Lodge of Glasgow, I was eligible to compete. Only one person knew of my intention to do so. The method, matter, or manner of what I wrote no one knew. Though, as I have said, there were 79 competitors, and some of them clergymen, none, when they came to read the lectures adopted, complained of the adjudication of all the prizes to me. I had left Scotland long before the award, and had made up my mind I was out of the running, when one day the Grand Master called upon me and handed me five £10 notes. I remember I was much surprised, for I

had never even seen so much money before. It was with this money that I set up the *Reasoner*.

When it became known in the Order that the prizes were awarded to me, some apprehensive members raised the question whether the money ought to be paid to me, or whether the Order ought to use the lectures written by me. An earthquake might happen in the Order if what I had written were read officially from time to time to a quarter of a million of men who belonged to the great Unity, for the memory of Gloucester Gaol was quite lively in the public mind. But the Order was honest, and I was paid. To pay a second time for worse lectures seemed bad economy and bad policy, and so the lectures were adopted. Several years elapsed before I made any public mention of my connection with them. As secrecy was to the interest of the Order, it was my duty to keep silence. Some enthusiastic officer of the Order, anxious to justify their choice, published privately an edition of the lectures for the gratification of members interested in seeing them. This was a serious breach of faith of which I knew nothing. I had taken no part in that step, and would have opposed it had I known of it. Some, indeed, thought I might have done it ; but the directors did me the justice to entirely disbelieve that I had any knowledge of, or connivance in, the surreptitious publication.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### *SINGULAR COINCIDENCES.*

(1846.)

THE shrewder officers of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows were right. Though no rumblings of earthquake were heard in the Order, some premonitory symptoms were felt six years later. But for six years calm pervaded the solid earth of the widespread Unity. Assurance that it would be so came in a letter from the Noble Grand Master of the Robert Burns Lodge, addressed to me in London. He had been attending the Grand Moveable Committee at Bristol, and on his return home he wrote as follows :—

“ 124, GALLOWGATE, GLASGOW, *June 11, 1846.*

“SIR AND BROTHER,—Inclosed is an order to any Lodge to which you may go to receive the Quarterly Password and Degree.

“We had a very fine meeting at Bristol, and I dare say that much has been done to consolidate and improve our Order. I also had the pleasure of perusing our New Lectures. They are splendid essays upon the subjects they treat of, and I wish the Board of Directors may soon get them circulated. I believe they will be the means of doing much good. They will undoubtedly give great satisfaction to all your friends here.—I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

“THOMAS DONALDSON.”

About 1852 the Unity sought legal protection. The Grand Master of the Order, Mr. William Benjamin Smith, of Birming-

ham, had drawn up a masterly statement of the disadvantages under which the Unity, as a friendly society, lay in respect of the funds being at the mercy of any knavish officer with a gift for plunder. When the protective bill which was passed by the Commons went up to the House of Lords, the Bishop of Oxford opposed it on the ground that I had written their Degree Lectures. The bishop, who was naturally tolerant and fair-minded, had been influenced or misled by statements forwarded to him by enemies of the bill acquainted with the origin of the lectures. What took place then, and how the bishop came to withdraw his opposition, the reader will see recounted in the chapter on the "Generosity of the Bishop of Oxford."

Another objection of a different kind, and not easy to be refuted, might have been brought against the genuineness of the lectures, founded upon a passage in one of them, had any one had the wit to make it. When I was writing the lecture on Charity, I was living in the house of Mr. David Glassford, St. Mirren's Street, Paisley. The house has been pulled down, and the street is all changed now. I sat with my back to a small bookcase, and often rested my head against the glass front as I cast about in thought for some new argument which should be clear and entirely secular. Though Secularism as a new form of thought and action was not then in my mind; I had merely a taste for reasoning on morality apart from theology. At length I put my argument thus:—

"The great obstacles in the way of the friendly intercourse of man with man are the incurable dislikes which some men have the misfortune to entertain for each other. But when we once agree 'to consider the errors of mankind as arising rather from the want of knowledge than the defects of goodness,' we learn to feel for the most despicable some sympathy on account of their unhappy condition. We see that those who agree not with us have some difference in capacity, constitution, or education; and, instead of being repelled because their opinions and tastes seem inferior to our own, we are invited by a prospect of improving and enlightening them—for the voice of kindness and intelligence never fails to soften and refine the rugged and the ignorant. Hence we may be charitable to those we deem mentally unfortunate. If we behold a fellow-creature running

counter to his own happiness, we are satisfied that it is rather his misfortune than his fault.

"This sentiment, that thus has a basis in intelligence, is also justified by self-love and confirmed by human interest. Should you hate your fellow-man, what reason is there that he should not hate you? If you shall regard him but with indifference, you justify him in regarding you with indifference; and why should you provoke only apathy where possibly you might win esteem? But if you fall on the wiser and happier alternative of affection, or at least friendliness, as dislike creates dislike, so love awakens love, the kindlier emotions are reciprocated, and men who else were foes become, by the generous influence of enlightened charity, pacific and fraternal."

At the time I believed this argument to be entirely new. It never occurred to me before, nor had I ever heard or seen anything like it. Some time after the prizes referred to were awarded, and sent to the press, I was again a guest of Mr. Glassford in the same house and occupying the same room. The day being wet and misty as only a Scotch day can be, I turned to the bookcase against which I had formerly sat, just to see what kind of dusty-looking books my friend kept there. It was necessary in my vocation to understand the Covenanter mind, and this seemed an opportunity of doing it. The narrow bookcase was let into the wall, and previously I had thought it locked. Finding it was not, I opened it, and the very first book I took down was a volume of sermons by Richard Hooker. I had read of the "judicious" Hooker, but had never had a work of his in my hands, and I was glad and curious to judge for myself in what the "judiciousness" consisted for which he was so much praised. But greater than I expected were my surprise and interest when the very page which I accidentally opened contained exactly the argument I had constructed myself!

Few persons knowing the circumstances under which I had written my lecture on Charity, with the bishop's volume at hand, would not conclude that my passage was a plagiarism and no coincidence. They would be confirmed in their belief on noticing that in the said lecture I actually cite the following passage:—"If I do harm I must look to suffer; there being no reason that others should show greater love to me than they

have by me shown unto them " (Richard Hooker : *book i., c. 8, Ecclesiastical Polity*). This passage, when proofs of the Lectures came to me, I was glad to quote, as it might prevent my secular arguments being suspected of heresy. I had no idea that the bishop had preceded me altogether. Had I known it before, I should have quoted his words triumphantly, and have made the fortune of my chapter in the orthodox eyes of the Prize Committee.

Not having opportunity of reading as much as I ought, other instances of this kind have happened to me. Had I been what is called "well read," many things would have been known to me which I had to find out for myself. Still there was consolation in the saying of Hobbes, that "had he read as much as his neighbours did, he would be as ignorant as they were."

Several times (the first in Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1862), I had said that Mr. Gladstone was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer known to have a conscience. Others may have had it, but finding no use for it in public affairs, the people had not discerned it. On December 4, 1891, I read for the first time an old newspaper report of Mr. Cobden's speech in Exeter Hall, February, 1855, in which he said, "Mr. Gladstone was a statesman who had a conscience, and when once you had convinced his understanding, you were sure to have his support, whether in office or out of it."

## CHAPTER XL.

### *FRANCIS PLACE AND THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.*

(1846-60.)

THE Duke of Wellington was a cold, hard, contemptuous, unsympathetic Tory. He had strong sense, honesty, and veracity, and no desire of killing people when they did not stand in the way of carrying out orders. I have known many soldiers who served under him, but none who had affection for him. He treated his men as he did his muskets. He kept them dry and clean, and ready for action. He took the same care of them as he did of his stores—but had no more human regard for them, or personal sympathy with them, than he had for any other war material.\* When Napoleon found a corporal asleep at his post, he took up his musket, and kept guard until he awoke. Wellington would have called the guard to arrest him, and had him shot. Thousands of soldiers were ready to die for Napoleon. No soldier ever showed eagerness to die for Wellington, and some sought to shoot him. Yet Wellington had the virtue of being an economist in the lives of his men, while Napoleon lavished them. Kleber said Napoleon was a great general at the cost of ten thousand Frenchmen a week.

In the "Life and Times of Queen Victoria," it is said of Wellington that "he never regarded himself as in any sense the servant of the people. It was as the sworn servant of the Crown that he always spoke and acted, and the only test he ever applied to any project of legislation was, whether it was

\* "Lord Wolseley had declared that Wellington cannot be placed in the first line of Generals because he did not secure, nor even try to secure the affection of his soldiers." *Wellington*, George Hooper. Macmillan, 1889, p. 224.

likely to strengthen or weaken the Monarchy." He looked upon the people simply as persons to be kept in order, and had no idea that liberty and responsibility would enable them to take care of themselves. In military matters it was not possible to impose upon him—concerning social facts he was as credulous as the country Tory vicar of the time. The duke believed the reports that French Jacobin gold incited English agitation. It was regarded as vulgar ignorance when the French Jacobins believed that English gold was the cause of all their trouble. The duke had this vulgar credulity in politics. Though he had been Premier in England, he wrote to the Earl of Malmesbury saying "he entertained no doubt that there exists a formidable conspiracy, but as yet we have not got a trace of it. We certainly had not when I quitted office, nor do I believe the King's servants have." Yet having "no trace" of it, he still believed it.

"We have in this country," he said, "unfortunately, a numerous class of men well educated who go about in gigs. You will ask how are their gigs paid for? I answer I know that the Société Propagande of Paris has at its command very large means from subscriptions all over Europe, but particularly from the Revolutionary bankers in France." The duke could not know this, but in politics he was ready to believe whatever he was told. There never was a Liberal propagandist society that had funds, and bankers were never the persons to supply them. This did not prevent the duke believing they did.

At the time when he was contriving plans for meeting the Birmingham Political Union in the field, and the whole country was convulsed with demands for reform, he said (1) the mass of the people cared nothing for the bill and were neither agitating nor agitated; (2) the agitation, if any, was subsiding; (3) it would subside if time was only given it. This old anti-Reform formula of 1830 is repeated in 1891, with regard to Ireland.

In 1840, when Mr. Owen's Social Agitation was represented by Social Missionaries, whom the Bishop of Exeter proposed to put down by coercion, the duke was told that these men were mostly well-informed, and personally of good character. His reply was, "Oh, yes, they are clever; they are clever devils." In his eyes all political reformers were seditious, and all social reformers satanic.

In the duke's time there was living in London, not far from his residence at Apsley House, a man in every way as unlike the duke in character as he was in station—known as "the Radical Tailor of Charing Cross." This was Francis Place, who was one day to circumvent the duke at the height of his power.

Place was a working tailor at the beginning of this century. He was somewhat short in stature, solidly built, with a grave, intelligent face. He was self-taught, studious, well-read, with a strong understanding, without passion, and of immovable resolution. He advised young men who had a taste for the work of a publicist, to continue in business until they had saved money and had some to spare, so as to aid themselves any agitation in which they engaged. By being able to give money themselves they would have more influence than though they gave ten times as much in service. He followed himself the advice he gave. His house, then 16, Charing Cross, in which he had a large library, was the place of meeting for the leading Reformers of Westminster, whose projects were matured and whose policy was decided there. Jeremy Bentham encouraged Place both in his prudence and his political usefulness. Bentham, who lived in Queen Square, Westminster, took his utilitarian walks with Place, and accompanied him on his business calls to take orders from his customers, or deliver the garments he had made for them. While Place was engaged within, Bentham would walk outside until his friend emerged again, when they would continue their walks and their political conversation.

One day when Place was detained longer than usual with a customer difficult to please, Bentham sat down on the step, leaning his head upon his hand, probably meditating some constitution for the government of New Brazil, when there came under his eyes an open palm with a shilling in it. The sight aroused him from his reverie, and, on raising his head, he found a gentleman, who hastily withdrew his hand and begged pardon. He had mistaken Bentham for a person in distress needing assistance. But on Bentham looking up with his bright glance, refined expression, and white flowing locks, he saw he was a gentleman. The hand was instantly withdrawn with apologies. Bentham told Place of his adventure with expressions of respect for his kindly intending friend.

Place had great mastery of all the political questions of the day. He defended the views of Malthus with discrimination as against the misconceptions of William Godwin, then in the height of his popularity. Place was regarded as an equal antagonist. Though a friend and sympathizer with the general views of Godwin, he did not hesitate, in the interest of the public, to confute his errors. In the *Monthly Magazine*, and in such of the press as in those days condescended to notice a Radical writer, Place was described as "an independent and original thinker distinguished by research, accuracy, and acumen." Place was the associate and adviser of the leading Philosophical Radicals and others, as Miss Martineau, with whom he corresponded on her "Illustrations of Political Economy." So high an opinion had James Mill of him, that he entrusted Place with the formation of the political mind of his famous son John Stuart. In after years, when Place was preparing for death, with that deliberation and forethought which always characterized him, he packed up all the letters he had ever received from John Stuart Mill and sent them to him at Blackheath. But the messenger could not find the house. Whether he kept them, or lost them, or whether the messenger delivered them to Mrs. Chatterton, the actress whom Place married, I could never discover from any member of his family or from hers—though years ago I made many endeavours. Mr. Joseph Cowen assisting by enquiries among actors, as Professor Bain wished to see them. If they exist, they would throw more light upon the views, character, and political relations of John Stuart Mill than anything he has said or left behind him. Place was his confidant and agent—and he had no other among politicians.

When Francis Place died, Mr. Mill wrote in the *Spectator* of that day a short notice of him, covering his career in a few words—a reward in itself from Mill's pen of the singular services of Place's life. In Mr. Place's time, young insurgent politicians of any capacity went to him. He instructed them, he counselled them—I well know how wisely; in danger, he found them means of defence, and made known their peril to those who might protect them. Mr. Mill and Mr. Grote showed generous knowledge of it all.

In 1849 I had attacked the Messrs. Chambers in the *Spiriti*

of the Age, for an article they had published, entitled, the "Reaction against Philanthropy." The vehemence with which I wrote led them to take the unusual course of replying in *Chambers's Journal*. On that occasion I received from Mr. Place the following letter, which I quote exactly as it was expressed, in Place's quaint, vigorous, candid way :—

"BROMPTON SQUARE, *March 3*, 1849.

"MASTER HOLYOAKE,—I have read your paper of observations on a paper written by Chambers, and dislike it very much. You assume an evil disposition in Chambers, and have laid yourself open to the same imputation. This dispute now consists of three of us, you and I and Chambers—all three of us, in vulgar parlance, being philanthropists. I have not read Chambers, but expect to find, from what you said and quoted, that he, like yourself, has been led by his feelings, and not by his understanding, and has, therefore, written a mischievous paper. I will read this paper, and decide for myself. Knowledge is not wisdom. The most conspicuous proof of this was the conduct of Lord Brougham. He knows many things—more, indeed, than most men—but is altogether incapable of combining all that relates to any one case, *i.e.*, understanding it thoroughly, and he therefore never exhausts any subject, as a man of a more enlarged understanding would do. This, too, is your case. I think I may say that not any one of your reasonings is as perfect as it ought to be, and if I were in a condition to do so, I would make this quite plain to you by carrying out your defective *notions*—reasonings, if you like the term better.

"It will, I am sure, be admitted, at least as far as your thinking can go, that neither yourself, nor Chambers, nor myself would intentionally write a word for the purpose of misleading, much less injuring, the working people ; yet your paper must, as far as it may be known to them, not only have that tendency, but a much worse one—that of depraving them, by teaching them, in their public capacity, to seek revenge, to an extent which, could it pervade the whole mass, must lead to slaughter among the human race—the beasts of prey called mankind ; for such they have ever been since they have had existence, and such as they must remain for an indefinite time, if not for ever. Their ever being anything else is with me a forlorn hope, while yet,

as I can do no better, I continue in my course of life to act as if I really had a strong hope of immense improvement for the good of all.—Yours really and truly,

“FRANCIS PLACE.”

There was value in Mr. Place's friendship. He was able to measure the minds of those with whom he came in contact, and for those for whom he cared he would do the service of showing to them the limits within which they were working. It was thus he took trouble to be useful to those who could never requite him, by putting strong, wide thoughts before them. For himself, he took no steps even to be remembered.

The meeting of two such men as the Duke of Wellington and Francis Place, of views so opposite, each distinguished in his sphere—one, the greatest military commander, the other the greatest working-class politician of his time—was a singular occurrence. It came about thus :

Political excitement ran high all over the country, and especially in London. A Tory Administration was in power, and the Premier was a soldier of overshadowing prestige who thought intimidation was the whole art of government. When dismay and hopelessness prevailed, Place took the course of waiting upon the duke, with four other working men, to represent to him the political condition of the people, and how much reform in Parliament was needed to improve their condition. It was an entirely dangerous proceeding, for the duke was not a man to approach with impunity. On arriving at Apsley House, the duke agreed to see them. When they went upstairs, they found his Grace leaning with his back against the mantelpiece. Whether the duke recognized the name of Francis Place, which would be on the paper of application for the interview, I know not, but his more familiar designation as the “Radical Tailor of Charing Cross” would not be a recommendation to the favourable reception of the duke.

When they entered the room, the duke said in his abrupt, contemptuous way, “Well ! what do you want ? ”

Mr. Place, who was spokesman for the humble deputation, stated that agitation pervaded all classes of society, filling the country with alarm, shaking public confidence, arresting

commercial enterprise : trade was suffering, and the condition of the working class was growing more desperate every day.

The duke heard their brief story—they made it brief, knowing he was not an amiable person to delay with Radical pleas. The duke answered in his curt, unsympathetic way, "I suppose you men know that I am responsible for public order. I know how to keep it. You can go."

Of course, they went, glad that nothing worse befell them than that abrupt dismissal. Before they were well out of the room, the duke called out, "Come back." They returned with some trepidation, expecting the duke would order their arrest. It appeared that the duke had been impressed by their plain, manly story, and, looking at them, he said, "You seem to be men who have heads on your shoulders. Take care you keep them there."

There was a rough sort of compliment in the duke's imperious candour characteristic of him. The intrepid deputation bowed, the duke turned away, and they departed, not without amazement.

Two years later the Duke of Wellington was driven from power a second time. One morning when the citizens of London appeared in the streets they found placards on the walls in large letters bearing two lines only—"Stop the Duke—Go for Gold."

How came these placards there? What printer had the temerity to print them? What stickers could be trusted with the dangerous task of setting them up, who might have been seized and imprisoned until they disclosed their employers, if indeed they escaped on those terms? Who devised that expedient of disturbing the Government of the duke? In those days of spies and militaryism the scheme was dangerous alike in conception and execution. The duke never knew that the blow came from one of the deputation whom he admonished "to keep their heads upon their shoulders." It was Francis Place who devised the scheme—which certainly he carried out.

He knew a printer in a court in Holborn who could be trusted. One Saturday afternoon when the men had left he went in to the master, examined his stock of paper, and finding it sufficient, he went out and brought in beer and food sufficient

for two days, flour, a billstickers' flat can and a brush. They then locked the doors, and he and Place worked all night and the greater part of the Sunday, Place and he pulling alternately at the hand press. They made paste, and a bag which would hold the placards concealed under a loose overcoat, and on midnight of Sunday, Place went out and put up the placards himself, sticking them up in the most convenient places he came to. At certain points, he passed his friend, the printer, who had a supply of placards, which he put quickly into Place's bag, who then went on with his bill-sticking until daylight—when they went back and distributed the type. So, when the men returned to work on Monday morning, no one but Place and the printer knew how London had been placarded.

In the excitement in which London was, this suggestive warning produced an immense impression. The public knew not whence the mysterious announcement came, and, knowing nothing, every one imagined everything. No one doubted that the warning came from influential quarters. The Bank of England was besieged, and the duke who would not have retreated before an army—retreated before Place's placards.

Debate has arisen as to whether the words of the placard were "Run for Gold" or "Go for Gold." The evidence is in favour of "Go." The competent testimony of Mr. Collet admits that Place devised the placard. On hearing Joseph Parkes read a copy of a proposed wall-bill, Place stopped him and wrote instead a placard of one line "To stop the Duke—Go for Gold." It was like Place's directness and impatience of verbiage. Mr. Collet saw one of these bills at Saville House, Leicester Square, on Saturday, May 12, 1832, which may have been one Place had procured. Mr. J. G. Harney relates that he saw a placard at St. Hiliers which bore the words, "J. Brooks, Printer, Oxford Street, London," probably a reproduction of Place's placard, as £80 was subscribed to multiply them. Mr. Brooks claimed to have been the originator of the bill. Doubleday, in his "Life of Sir Robert Peel," says, "The placard was the device of four gentlemen who each put down £20 that thousands might be printed of the terrible missives. The effect was hardly to be described. It was electric." Miss Helena Cobbett, the last surviving child of William Cobbett, writes to Mr. Harney that "Her Father in

the *Register*, vol. lxxvi. p. 392, mentioned the placard at the time of its appearance, and that her brother James had added to it a note, saying, 'The placard was suggested by Mr. John Fielden to Mr. T. Attwood, Mr. J. Parkes, and others.'" Mr. Samuel Kydd sends an extract from Alison's "History of Europe," which supplies a name for the placard which explains its efficiency. "Then were seen the *infernal* placards in the streets of London. 'To Stop the Duke—Go for Gold!' and with such success was the suggestion adopted, that in three days no less than £1,800,000 was drawn out of the Bank of England in specie" (vol. iv. p. 373). The Duke resigned his first Premiership November 16, 1830, and returned to office May 9, 1832, and resigned on the 18th. The public agitations of which the placard was but a symbol, limited the Duke's second reign to nine days.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### *FIRST PLAN OF THE WOMAN'S RIGHTS AGITATION.*

(1847-69.)

IN 1840 there were no signs of an agitation for the civil rights of women. Only a small number of women knew how few the rights of their sex were, or had any desire to increase them. The majority did not know, in any intelligent way, whether they had any civil rights at all. Women had no journal of their own. Ladies' newspapers there were, but they were edited by gentlemen. The public tongue of women was in the mouth of men. Among social reformers, Mrs. Chappell Smith, Mrs. Emma Martin, and one or two others were public advocates of social rights. Only in that quarter of society were women speakers seen upon the platform; they were counted wilful and presuming, and it was thought that they would be better employed at home. At a later period a lady known as Mrs. Clara Lucas Balfour appeared as a lecturer on uncontested subjects before religious and literary societies. She was a lady of goodly presence, whose husband was the littlest man ever seen about the House of Commons. He had an appointment in the Private Bills office. He had fought on the *Bellerophon*, and it was put down to his sailor's daredevilism that he allowed his wife to speak in public.

Seeing how much faster political and social amendment would proceed were the quick discernment and decision of women engaged in public affairs, I often spoke of it in lectures. The fine scorn of women for delay in doing what can be done and ought to be done was much wanted in politics, where men who declare an evil to be intolerable will desist from abating it on

the appearance of the first fool who tells them "the time is not come" to act against it. Women, being one-half of society, suffered greatly by the intolerance and ignorance of men in matters which did not concern men. Still the women who well knew this, and wrote eloquently against it, had no idea of combining against it.

In 1847 I wrote in the *Free Press*, printed in the Isle of Man for the advantage of free postal circulation in England, the following passages :—

"Women have no *esprit de corps*. The language of Lord Grey, when he said, 'I shall stand by my order,' is scarcely understood by them. We have a race of women, but no order of women. . . . Reputable and intelligent women were deputed in America to attend a conference of the Peace Society in London. They crossed the Atlantic on this public mission, and when they arrived in London they were refused the privilege of sitting in the conference because they *were women*. Yet this insult was never resented.

"The police courts of the metropolis are satiated with complaints of half-murdered women against brutal husbands who escape with comparative immunity. But where are the women out of court who remonstrate? Why have they not formed a society for their own protection? Women desire a share in the suffrage. They are taxed, and therefore they claim a right to vote. But where are women's political unions—self-originated and self-sustained? If they want political rights, why do they not themselves ask for them? If it is unwomanly to ask for them, it will be unwomanly to exercise them when granted—in short, unwomanly to have them. Women, like peers, should 'stand by their order'—should have societies of their own. The impunity with which women are despoiled of property, liberty, and even of their children, at the caprice of their husbands, as some melancholy instances in our law courts have lately shown, is an imputation more powerful than any conceivable argument upon the womanly spirit of this nation. Let them take their own affairs into their own hands, as Sir Robert Peel once advised the men of this country to do.

"Let them draw up a list of their legal disabilities, and take the usual constitutional modes of obtaining redress. Let them

have societies and public meetings of their own. Let all the offices be filled by women—let the audiences be of women entirely. Let the womanly mind come into action as a separate element of reform—as a ‘Fifth Estate.’ It is no use to *talk* about fitness; it must be proved—the question is not one of theory, but of practice. If women have capacity for public affairs, let it be demonstrated. Familiar as women now are with literature, we have not one periodical, magazine, or newspaper conducted by women. In America the *Lowell Offering* was produced by Lowell factory-girls, but in England we have nothing of the kind. The *Lady's Newspaper* is not conducted by women. We ought to have a *Woman's Journal*—edited by women, contributed to by women, and in every sense an exponent of womanly thought and an advocate of women's rights. Hints and suggestions might be accepted from men, but no interference, no dictation, no direction. For well or ill, skilfully or unskilfully, the act should be their own in every sense.”

I suggested this to several intelligent women without inducing one to follow it out. Those who saw the importance were not prepared to act upon it, and those who were able wanted the spirit of enterprise. “Propose it to Margaret Fuller,” said one, when that lady was in this country. But it was not good taste to press upon an American lady a task that ought to be undertaken by an English one. I further urged that “an enterprising woman of wise will, who would undertake such a task, and would train her unpractised sisters in the art of self-emancipation, would be more of a practical benefactor than the authoress of twenty volumes in favour of their rights. When women begin to conduct their own affairs—to generate an *esprit de corps* among themselves, to discuss their own questions in public—there will be blunderings committed, weaknesses displayed, exaggerations perpetrated; but let them remember that men blundered, erred, and exaggerated times without number before they arrived at their present facility. Failure must be ventured or efficiency will never be won. Were women to attempt to legislate for men, and exclude them from their Parliament while doing it, and suffer no information of the rights or claims of men to come before them save through their wives—what an outcry there would

be from men against what they would call 'one-sided, ignorant, blundering, unjust, insolent, feminine legislation !' "

In the two articles from which the preceding passages were taken other arguments may be read, now familiar, which were then new or unfamiliar.

Previously to writing in the *Free Press* what has been cited, I spoke with Madame Belloc (then Bessie Rayner Parkes), with Madame Bodichon (then Barbara Leigh Smith), with Madame Venturi (then Mrs. Hawkes), with Miss Sophia Dobson Collet, and other ladies interested in the public action of women. Harriet Martineau was also one whom I consulted upon the subject. None thought my suggestions practicable.

There was no doubt in my mind that they would be realized. The arguments of Mary Wollstonecraft and Madame de Staël, the splendid political capacity Harriet Martineau displayed, must issue in action. In lectures and in the *Reasoner* my subject was frequently the "Civil Rights of Women." A handsome sarcophagus inkstand was given me by a committee of ladies in Glasgow in acknowledgment of these efforts. When a publisher in Fleet Street, I obtained, in 1857, through Mr. John Stuart Mill, the consent of Mrs. Mill to issue in a cheap form her famous articles, "Are Women fit for Politics? Are Politics Fit for Women?" and circulated four thousand. Until now no other edition has appeared.

It was not until ten years after the articles quoted from the *Free Press* were written, not until 1857, that women set up a journal of their own. The very name I gave—*Woman's Journal*—was adopted. Women began to edit their own papers. They have organized associations of their own now. They hold meetings of their own sex, preside over them themselves, speak from the platform, make themselves an independent power in the State, and have now come to excel men in University contests.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### *THE SON OF A POET WHO BECAME A NOTABLE JOURNALIST.*

(1850-70.)

THORNTON HUNT, the eldest son of Leigh Hunt, was, like George Henry Lewes, his friend, a fragile-looking man. Dark, slender, but compact, he had piercing eyes and a singular precision of speech—strong without being loud, and strikingly articulate. The tones were confident, as those of one who had something to say. He gave to those to whom he spoke the impression of being a well-informed, competent man, to whom it was worth while to listen. When a boy, he was with his father during his imprisonment, and was so engaging to Charles Lamb when he was a visitor to the prison that he wrote some charming verses to Thornton, as is well known. Thornton Hunt had West Indian prejudices as well as an Indian complexion. He was by instinct entirely a gentleman—fearless, true, courteous, and decided in opinion. If he entered a house as a guest, and held any opinion or rule of action which he thought it material that his host should know, he informed him thereof. Though tolerant of others where he dissented from them, he would not live under tolerance himself. Socialist, Communist, Chartist, Atheist, insurgent, regicide, were all interesting to him. He desired to know what made them what they were. He was by nature a journalist, and nothing in human life or character was above or beneath him. Human life was a necessary part of his public knowledge. Thornton Hunt's full name was Thornton Leigh Hunt, but he never used "Leigh" as part of his name. because it was so well known as

his father's Christian name. With honourable delicacy he did not wish to associate any views of his with his father's name ; nor did he wish to accept any consideration, or to bespeak any leniency of judgment, for himself as the son of a distinguished poet. Like his father, his generosity continually exceeded his means. I often dined with his family at the Broadway, Hammer-smith, where another and considerable family, left orphans by relatives, were at table, and were maintained in his house. At that time I knew that he dictated so many leading articles in a week that his earnings might have made him rich. All the time he lived most frugally, and all he gained was consumed in generous acts. Like his father, he was incapable of making provision for himself. It did not seem to occur to him. His main thought was for the misfortunes of others. No one I ever knew better illustrated Lindsay Gordon's lines—

“ Though this world be but a bubble,  
Two things stand like stone :  
Kindness in another's trouble,  
Courage in our own.”

Thornton Hunt had two passions—namely, for political freedom and social improvement—and a third, stronger than either, in favour of liberty of opinion and the right to translate it into action. He had a contempt for that philosophic opinion which led to no result. He was a subscriber to the oddest by-way Chartist funds, and found time to attend executive meetings. He was with me as one of the executive who gave the last public dinner to Feargus O'Connor at Highbury Barns on the night when O'Connor first displayed a failure of intellect.

When Thornton Hunt was consulting editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, I used to drive with him some mornings to Lord Palmerston's at Cambridge House, Piccadilly, where Mr. Hunt frequently went to learn the views which the Government wished taken in the journal he represented, to which he would give expression, maintaining his independency of judgment at the same time. He told me that “ Lord Palmerston knew nothing of human life below his carriage steps—with the world of the people on the pavement he had no familiarity. He had only a carriage knowledge of mankind.”

Mr. Cobden had refused an offer made by Lord Palmerston

of a seat in the Cabinet. Lord Palmerston was then desirous that Mr. Bright should take office, as Mr. Cobden's refusal had been said to be owing to Mr. Bright not having been asked. Afterwards Lord Palmerston told Mr. Hunt to inform me that, if he knew that Mr. Bright would be willing to take a seat, he would make a proposal to him. The understanding was that I should endeavour to ascertain what Mr. Bright's views were. Accordingly, I asked a political friend, in the habit of speaking to Mr. Bright on public affairs, to tell him that, if he were disposed under any circumstances to accept office under Lord Palmerston, he could have it. Mr. Bright, as the public knows, never was disposed.

The reasons which influenced me in being a medium of this communication I did not conceal. It did not seem to be to the public advantage that distinguished friends of the people should refuse office. It was the opinion of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright that they could do most good in opposition. Still, it seemed objectionable to blame the Government for not doing more, and yet refuse to enter the Government and attempt to do more themselves. Of course, if they had good knowledge that they would be outvoted in the Cabinet, and they nevertheless become personally responsible for its inaction, or wrong action, they would be justified in remaining in opposition. But it appeared to me the experiment ought to be tried, and, if it failed, their return to opposition would have greater weight with the country. Looking at the question from the people's point of view, it was useless to complain, as was often done, that our friends were excluded from the Government if, when they had the opportunity, they would not join it. The presence of the enemies of evil would oft prevent evil being done.

Thornton Hunt was trained by Rintoul, the founder of the *Spectator*, the most perfect weekly newspaper we ever had in England. In it all the news of the dailies was re-written and condensed—all the essential Parliamentary papers were carefully summarized. Every essential topic of the day was made clear to the reader, so that he who took the *Spectator* (which was then ninepence, and such a paper would be worth a shilling now) was well informed on all questions of news, politics, and literature. Mr. Hunt told me that on Friday Mr. Rintoul would give him a Parliamentary paper for which there was

space for two columns. It would transpire that that space was not available, and the *précis* would have to be re-written to reduce it to a column and a half. At a late hour it would be found that there was room for only one column, when the *précis* had to be reduced again—not by ellision, but by re-writing. It was Mr. Rintoul's religion to produce a perfect newspaper, and in that sense he was the most religious man of his profession. If there are newspapers in the other world, no doubt Mr. Rintoul is the first journalist there. All the ripe fruit of Mr. Hunt's training under Mr. Rintoul was seen in his programme of the *Leader* newspaper elsewhere quoted.

Mr. Hunt told me how he had once applied for a place on the staff of a journal then of rising influence. He needed no introduction to the proprietor; his name was a letter of recommendation. When he had explained in what way he believed he could contribute to the development of the paper, the proprietor in a few words showed at once his knowledge of Mr. Hunt's character and knowledge of his own enterprise. "Mr. Hunt," said he, "what we want is not strong thinking, but strong writing." The policy, the fortunes, and success of the paper were all included in those few words. Of course the success of such a paper depends upon the sort of readers to whom it appeals.

Yet in judgment and action Mr. Hunt was sometimes entirely wrong—in my opinion in two instances. One was when Mr. Delane had, in *The Times*, charged Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright with "seeking to reduce the franchise as a step to spoliation," with a view to "seize on the estates of the proprietors of land and divide them gratuitously among the poor." This, if true, would expose them to execration and destroy them as public leaders. Mr. Cobden resented the imputation in a letter of just indignation. *The Times* refused insertion to his defence of himself and Mr. Bright. It was sent to all the daily journals. The *Daily News* and *Morning Star* alone inserted it. The *Daily Telegraph* declined to insert it, but published a leading article upon it, so much to the taste of *The Times* that Mr. Delane quoted it. Mr. Hunt wrote several letters to Mr. Cobden to the effect that they were consulting Mr. Cobden's interest by denying him the opportunity of being heard in his own defence, so far as their journal was concerned, at the same

time professing personal respect for Mr. Cobden—which was real. Mr. Cobden resented this, and said it was within their province to refuse his letter, but they should have remained neutral in a controversy where the plaintiff was not to be heard. These letters of Mr. Hunt were quite unlike his better and habitual self. It was otherwise an error to encounter a man of Cobden's vigorous sagacity with an unsubstantial plea.

To write about one's friend as though he was perfect is not to command regard for him. The perfect man is not about, and the reader, not having met with him, will be unprepared to believe in him if adduced here.

The other instance in which I thought my friend wrong was earlier than the one just given. It was at the time when the Crimean War was first in the air. The policy of the *Leader* in respect to it was discussed. Mr. Hunt's doctrine was that nations, like individuals, were sometimes the better for blood-letting, which seemed very shocking to me. I had read in Malthus and other doctrinaires of population, that society was kept down by famine, pestilence, and war, but I never before heard war deliberately advocated for that end, or that public plethora required to be relieved by bleeding. In war, the persons who are bled are the people, while the plethora is among their masters, who are never bled. This doctrine was contrary to Mr. Hunt's habitual humanity. Yet he spoke of it without remorse or misgiving as one of the ordinary principles of political wisdom. The doctrine yet prevails in newspaper quarters.

Thornton Hunt agreed with Mr. Bright (I do not) in his repugnance to direct representation of labour. I had written in *The Times* upon the political education of the working people. The following letter, written from the house in which Mr. Hunt died, refers to this:—

“26, EUSTON SQUARE, N.W., *Feb.* 12, 1871.

“MY DEAR HOLYOAKE,—The moment I saw your splendid letter in *The Times* I wanted to write you, expressing the delight I had in reading it. And not only for its immediate subject, but for its general bearing on the real truth of progress. It makes me want to have at least *a* talk with you, though I often wish for more. But I have been specially baulked—by

the *perpetual* press of business on my personal attention, by the constantly increasing press of weakened health, and lately by the state of quarantine in which my house has been placed through the illness of my daughter Kathleen. She has had small-pox, but is now convalescent—after a mild attack—and in a week or two I expect to be released. I only hope this letter will not dismay you ; but she is quite isolated at the top of the house. I have not seen her. Those liable have been re-vaccinated—nearly all in the house ; two or three of us having had the malady, myself among that section. And my writing place is at the bottom of the house, in a room separate from the rest.

“I wanted especially to moot two questions to you : the hideous proposal of the ‘direct representation of labour’—a class-perpetuating notion of the worst kind ; and the Emperor Napoleon’s best ‘*Idée*’ of a periodical congress. On the last I want much to engage your mind. It is gaining very remarkable converts. As Napoleon said to me in 1864, the periodical assembling would cause many a question to be discussed and settled that now begets a congress only through quarrel, and perhaps actual war ; and, as I said to him, the records of that congress would be the very commencement of that international law which now *has no existence*, except in the Library, and there only as doctrine which may, or may not, suit the practice of nations. Internationally we still have neither more nor less than anarchy, modified by a very limited sense of decency. I have long wished that your mind turned itself to that problem.

“And I often wish that we met more. But I *will* come to you at 20, Cockspur Street, when I am out of quarantine.—Ever yours, as ever,

“THORNTON HUNT.”

This letter is quoted, as it gives a glimpse of the writer’s daily life, and an instance of the large views he entertained and the great opportunities he possessed of influencing public affairs in the direction of progress.

Thornton Hunt’s handwriting was as quaint as the old schoolmen. He wrote as the monks would write a missal. It was his taste to wear a close-fitting clerical dress, and, as his complexion was dark, he had the appearance of a Spanish

priest, as may be seen in M. Hervieu's painting of him, which aptly renders his singular expression.

His death occurred many years before it need have done. It was not unforeseen. On several occasions I visited him at Broadway when he was prostrated by the continuity of overwork. When I urged rest and travel, he would say it was impossible ; he could not give the time.

"You forget," I would say, "that there is one thing to which you will have to give time."

"What is that?" he asked.

"Time to die. I generally observe that has to be attended to, and causes lengthened interruption in fulfilling engagements."

He did not relent or relax. You could see leading articles in his corrugated expression. So it came to pass that, while he was still in the available maturity of his mind, he was carried to Kensal Green Cemetery and laid in the grave of his father. His friend Mr. Levy Lawson and many distinguished journalists were present, and his oldest political associate, so far as I knew, Sir Eardley Wilmot, came up and talked with me of our lost friend.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### *CONCERNING LEIGH HUNT.*

(1851.)

LEIGH HUNT was a taller and statelier man than his son. Thornton one day took me to have tea with his father, who had done me the honour to wish to see me. His ample hair was grey then, but he had the same upright, bright, elastic look which all who had known him earlier knew. His easy, unaffected dignity was a welcome you never forgot.

Dickens is supposed to describe Leigh Hunt in his character of Harold Skimpole. Lord Macaulay was persuaded of this, because the name he first used was that of Leonard Horner, whose initials were the same as Leigh Hunt's. It is likely Dickens did intend at first to found the character upon Hunt's, but afterwards changed his purpose, and produced Skimpole, in whom he could better contrast heartlessness with airiness. Having changed his purpose, he changed the name. It would have been baseness as well as falseness to describe Leigh Hunt as heartless or selfish. Leigh Hunt had airiness of manner; so had his son Thornton, and like disregard of himself. The weakness of father and son was their sympathy—their fault was their generosity. Though it sometimes involved the loss of other people's money, it first involved the total loss of their own. They were like the river which fertilises the banks through which it flows until it becomes dry in its own bed. I have known several persons who would give away the money of others, without my thinking much of them on that account, but when I found that they gave away their own in like manner, never thinking of themselves, though I might wish that their generosity was restricted to the disposal of their own funds, I had respect for them, for their unselfishness.

Leigh Hunt had consented that a young energetic Manchester gentleman, John Stores Smith (under strong Carlylean impulses, as the style of what he wrote showed), should bring out a paper bearing the title of *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, of which Leigh Hunt's part was the popular attraction. But one day there appeared some imputations on Lord John Russell. Then Leigh Hunt withdrew from the paper. Lord John, with his usual affection for literary men, had given Leigh Hunt a pension which rendered his latter days pleasant to him. Lord John might, or might not, be open to Storian censure, but I quite agreed with the poet (who conversed upon it, as it occurred at the time of my visiting him) that he could not sanction scorn appearing in a paper bearing his name, as it would appear to the public like ingratitude from one who had accepted Lord John's friendship and favour. Lord Russell was not the man to exact coincidence of opinion with him from any one he had served, but there were always sufficient persons to express disparaging censure without his friends doing it, and the public service was not likely to suffer by Leigh Hunt's silence. He would, had his convictions turned that way and the public service required it, have dissented from his illustrious friend, but intellectual dissent is a very different thing from contemptuous censure.

Lord John Russell was himself a man of great independence of spirit and even warmth of heart, which coldness of manner concealed—owing more to want of buoyancy than feeling. One day as he walked up the House of Commons his small, diminutive figure seemed in great contrast to the majestic stature of Daniel O'Connell, who was passing by him to his seat. Some one remarking it to him afterwards, the "Liberator" said, "Ah ! it is easy to see that Lord John is the son of an old man."

Mr. Ballantyne, mentioned in another chapter as connected with the *Leader*, told me that when he was editor of the *St. James's Gazette*—which was not a flourishing journal—he waited upon Lord John to solicit him to take a pecuniary interest in the fortunes of the paper, which might thereby become an influential advocate of his lordship's policy. Lord John listened to Mr. Ballantyne with frigid courtesy until he had concluded, when he rose and said : "Mr. Ballantyne, I never court the press ; I never fear the press ; I never bribe the press—I wish you good-morning."

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE "LEADER" NEWSPAPER—ITS PRINCIPLES AND ITS WRITERS.

(1851-56.)

THE *Leader* newspaper excited greater hopes on its announcement, and has since its discontinuance lived longer in the memory of publicists than any other paper started in my time. Its title was not meant to be taken as egotistical in the sense of putting itself forward as a leader of journals, but as indicating that, as a journal should, the *Leader* would go in advance of the reader, spy out the unexplored regions of politics, morals, and speculation, and inform him of the pleasant places worth occupying. No journal conducted by gentlemen ever proposed, before or since, to do this in the same bold way. In one thing or other many journals are bold, but none bold in so many things, as the *Leader* undertook to be. It was Thornton Hunt who drew up the programme, which was privately circulated and never otherwise published. The following are passages from it :—

"The whole mechanical classification of the kinds usual with existing weekly journals will be cast aside for one calculated to bring out the interest of the current news. Every striking incident or class of incidents will be taken substantively.

"Every fact or point of interest connected with the subject will be diligently collected and studied. The whole will then be arranged and compressed into a neatly executed history of the affair, so as to make it the fullest, clearest, and most complete account of all printed. By this mode of treatment

giving the distinctness and simplicity of plain compilation, the papers will read with the smoothness and fulness of historical composition, the freshness and animation of an original article.

"The principle of the paper will be—the right of every opinion to its own free utterance. This principle involves a thorough recognition of *all* existing opinions and their expression in a more positive form than they have hitherto been able to obtain ; it involves also a proportionately distinct and positive statement of the opinions *entertained by the conductors of the journal*. With a principle so free, it will be necessary, in order to acquire rather than to repel influence, that this positive utterance of opinion should be executed in a skilful and decorous manner, in a generous and elevated spirit. It will proceed less by a spirit of antagonism against received opinions or parties, than by the direct development of more forcible opinions. The originators of the enterprise hold that the progress of their country and their kind is advanced by the fostering of new powers as the instruments for obtaining the fruits of opinion ; *since opinion, without social influence and political power, is a mere honorary and sterile distinction for the community among which it exists*. The endeavour will be kept up to obtain for the whole people the full exercise of the franchise and in extending education according to its lights, the new journal will constantly strive for the complete freeing of *secular education from all restraints of sect or dogmatical religion*. Again, in matter of religion every persuasion would meet with respect, and the sympathy due to conscience seen in action ; but the pure religion, which is superior to all, would animate the unceasing and strenuous endeavour for its own perfect emancipation. *Free Trade will be advocated, in order that the theoretical consummation already attained in this country shall be carried out in practice, and extended to other countries*. *Political economy, however, will be treated as a science not perfected, but demanding progressive development*, with the advance of general knowledge and the growing sense of social necessities."

The passages from this programme, in italics, sufficiently indicate the thoroughness and fearlessness which were afterwards characteristics of the paper. The principles of nearly all news-

papers are tempered by advertisers with a view to attract and retain them. Most journals follow public opinion—not lead it. Their boldness is limited by profitableness. It pays better to play the bagpipes in the rear than march in the vanguard. In other pursuits conscience is apt to collapse before loss, and journalism is not entirely exempt from this infirmity. The policy of the *Leader* was conscience, not consequence. The highest class of advertisements were re-written in the office where taste improved the effect. The aims of the paper were truth and originality.

In three conspicuous things in the programme cited, the *Leader* proved itself an advanced paper. In regarding political economy as imperfect and needing development, it was before John Stuart Mill, who had not then published his book of "Principles" in which he commenced this extension. It announced a policy of national and secular education, before Mr. Forster appeared in the field, with a boldness and precision to be found in no other newspaper of similar rank. It treated for the first time secular education as a distinct, concrete, self-existent thing which should be freed from all restraints of sect or dogmatical religion, in which it was before and beyond Mr. Forster. The *Leader* was for the extension and defence of free trade in land before the Cobden Club took that question in hand.

The Rev. E. R. Larken, a near relative of Lord Monson, was the chief promoter of the *Leader*, partly from his friendship for Thornton Hunt and partly from desire that a larger Christian liberalism than then existed, should have place in the press. Mr. Larken was the first clergyman who had the intrepidity to wear a beard in the pulpit. The upper and lower part of the face were shaven, but he retained his fine dark beard below the chin. Yet this limited innovation was thought to be very serious. It was regarded as indicating laxity in theological principle. Hearing him preach at his rectory on two occasions, I was very watchful, but no one by the use of a theological microscope could have discovered any departure from the tenets of the Church. George Dawson was the next minister in England who ventured to preach in a beard and with his face wholly unshaven, which brought upon him grave suspicions of latitudinarianism. Foreigners, as Orsini, Dr.

Bernard, and others wearing beards, were mostly introduced to Birmingham by the Dawson congregation. Bearded persons of that day were locally known as "Dawsonites."

Thornton Hunt was the editor, but G. H. Lewes, afterwards the husband of George Eliot, was its most brilliant and versatile writer. Herbert Spencer wrote articles in it which were the beginning of his fame. He had already become known by his work entitled "Social Statics." W. E. Forster gave his first indications in it of his interest in social questions by articles on the "Right to Labour." The chief proprietor, who spent the most money upon the paper, was a gentleman who afterwards became Examiner of Plays. He knew many languages, had many accomplishments, considerable Continental experience, and infinite vivacity both in speech and pen. I wrote papers under the signature of "Ion," partly because the name was brief, and more because I admired the character delineated by Serjeant Talfourd in his tragedy of that name. To letters I wrote under this signature, Wendell Phillips, the famous American Abolitionist orator, replied, in orations delivered in the Melodeon, Boston. He afterwards told me I was the only person in Europe to whom he ever replied.

One of the staff was Mr. W. J. Linton, the eminent wood engraver, who had other distinction both as writer and poet. He could speak well also. One night at a meeting on behalf of Italy, at the Old Crown and Anchor Tavern (then occupied by the Whittington Club, founded by Douglas Jerrold), referring to insurgents who had fallen in the cause of Italian freedom, Mr. Linton said "their fate was not to be mourned over, but to be imitated." George Dawson spoke that night, but no one said anything so heroic as this.

Another writer, a contributor to the *Reasoner*, known afterwards by excellent historic military works, though himself a civilian, was George Hooper. Thomas Ballantyne was on the staff, who had been a journalist on the side of the Manchester school, but afterwards wrote against them. He did not do this in the *Leader*. His reputation, through his change of opinion, was not to our advantage. He was an able, patient, watchful sub-editor; and was afterwards editor of the *St. James's Gazette*—a name that has since been revived.

The commissariat of the *Leader* fell to me with my other

duties, and its administration was very pleasant. In those days we only knew George Eliot as Marian Evans. She was residing then at Dr. Chapman's in the Strand, a few doors from our editorial office, which was in Wellington Street. My evening repasts were unexpected when I first introduced them, and George Eliot, who sometimes came in and joined us at table, used to call me "the Providence of the Office." Mr. Lewes, who wrote the Vivian Letters, always said something bright and graceful about "Rose." Mrs. Lewes was Rose, and she looked it, for she had a singularly bright complexion. She would sometimes join the evening repast.

The men of advanced opinions among the working class who chiefly valued the paper were not numerous enough to support it, and the middle class were not then liberal enough, nor intelligent enough, to do it to sufficient extent. In Universities and Parliament it had many subscribers. One drawback of its popularity was that it was written by writers who knew most things valued by those who knew as much as they, whereby many excellent papers were not understood by the general public. The audience thought of chiefly was the friends of writers in society, in Parliament, and the clubs. On one occasion an article was written of which the facts upon which it was based were known to only four persons in Europe—Bismarck, the Emperor Napoleon, Lord John Russell, and Thornton Hunt—and what was said was only comprehensible by them. Once I put the servant's bonnet on the handle of the office broom and placed it before Thornton (we always spoke of Mr. Hunt as Thornton) when he was writing, suggesting that he should make his arguments intelligible to that average young person in effigy. It was an illusion to suppose that you had to write down to the capacity of others. What was required was that a writer should make himself intelligible to persons entirely unfamiliar with the question. A master in science is always simple and clear. A master in rhetoric can always make his highest meaning plain to the lowest listener. A dainty meal need not be adulterated to render it eatable by the multitude.

I had had colleagues in other circles who considered it was a service to wealthy persons to afford them costly opportunities of promoting public progress, and would encourage their enthusiasm manifested that way. I was of a different way of

thinking ; I thought it right to make it quite clear what losses might arise. To this end I made similar tables for the *Leader* that I previously made for the *Spirit of the Age*, so that the proprietors were acquainted every week with the fluctuations or loss in their enterprise.

When the *Leader* had been published several years I went one morning to breakfast with the chief proprietor, who then lodged in Southampton Row, and asked him whether he would tell me what his motive was in continuing the paper. "Some men," I said, "spent their money on horses, or wine, or women ; the motive of that was intelligible—but why did he go on paying £41 a week for writing the *Leader* without prospect of its return ? If I knew his motive, it would save me concern." Excepting the desire to establish a high class advanced paper, he had no motive. Thereupon I proposed that my salary should be reduced one half, and that the same reductions should be recommended to all other contributors—for the longer a paper was able to exist the greater would be its reputation and chance of its becoming a property. My advice was acted upon. It was not likely to conduce to my popularity in the office ; but it was approved by the chief writers, and I never observed that it made any difference in their relations with me for having given it.

Subsequently, when the *Leader* came to an end, it was taken by Mr. Edward Whitty, who was a Roman Catholic, and sentiments appeared in it which made its friends wish that it had ceased to exist earlier. Mr. Whitty prolonged its existence, but for a short period. He was the son of the editor of the *Liverpool Post*. His sister was a famous opera singer. He first came into repute himself by writing for the *Leader* remarkable letters from the House of Commons, entitled, "A Stranger in Parliament," in which he introduced for the first time the phrase, "the governing classes," which afterwards entered political literature. He died on his way to Australia.

The first time my name ever appeared among public writers of repute was on the handsomely printed list of contributors to the *Leader*. The paper was intended to be fearless, and my name was thought to be a necessary proof of it, as the paper appealed to the boldness of thought of the time. I was against my name being advertised, as it might bring loss to the paper, my rule

being to aid, but never to hamper, an insurgent cause. My name probably cost the *Leader* £1,000 or more. Professor Maurice took alarm, and he alarmed Professor Charles Kingsley, who was not easy to alarm. There were other disquieting names in our list of writers, but mine was then thought the one most foreboding of innovation, as I was regarded as an atheist and republican. How far, or in what sense this was true, ecclesiastical persons never inquired then. What they inferred from my name were to them as facts.

The Rev. Mr. Maurice's son, in his biography of his father, represented Kingsley as telling Mr. Maurice that the publication of his name on the list of the contributors to the *Leader* was "an impudent attempt to involve him in opinions which he utterly disclaimed and hated." It is difficult to imagine Kingsley saying this—since he knew to the contrary. His name was only published once as one among persons "who *had* contributed to the *Leader*." We only knew Kingsley as an earnest and manly Christian who, differing from us on some questions, did not shrink from attacking us in our own columns. His only contribution was a letter of assault. No orthodox newspaper would have permitted us to attack its cardinal views in its own columns. We not only permitted Kingsley to do this, but honoured him for it. Of thirty names we gave, only five were "involved" in the opinion of the *Leader*. The others were men and women of mark, whom we had allowed to contribute expositions of their views, irrespective of any coincidence with the programme of the *Leader*. The conductors of the paper were men of scrupulous honour, and far too proud to admit Mr. Kingsley to write if he had given any hint that he regarded it as "an impudent attempt to involve him in opinions which he utterly disclaimed."

The Rev. Dr. Jelf had laid down the following fine ecclesiastical syllogism to the Rev. Mr. Maurice:—"Mr. Maurice is identified with Mr. Kingsley, Mr. Kingsley is identified with Mr. Holyoake—Mr. Holyoake is identified with Tom Paine."

Had I spoken of Dr. Richard Jelf as Dick Jelf, it would be rightly counted vulgar offensiveness—to speak of Thomas Paine as "Tom Paine" was not less so. Paine was a passionate theist, which should exempt him from clerical disrespect. He inspired the American nation with a spirit of independence, which made

it free, and that is more than all the Jelfs that ever were have done. It happens that I was more opposed to Paine's principles than Dr. Jelf, but the antagonists of the *Leader* were not often particular in facts or courtesy.

After the *Leader* had been issued for some months, and the public could judge how far it fulfilled its professions, the following words were used on the only announcement in which Mr. Kingsley's name appeared :—

“England is said to be governed by Opinion. To endow that Power with its fullest action the *Leader* offers a systematic utterance for *perfect freedom of opinion in politics, religion, literature, science, and art.*

“For the struggling nationalities abroad it offers a frank voice among the English people. In its columns, devoted weekly to European Democracy, it gives an *official* exposition of the opinions and acts of the great leaders of the European Democratic party, in a form of such authenticity as will enable the public to correct the misrepresentations of the adverse journals of the day. The *Leader* seeks to develop the utmost freedom of intellect, energy of production, popular power, and in the political and social relation of all classes the paramount interest of natural affection.”

With all the advance of opinion, the *Leader* has had no successor in range, thoroughness, and courage.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### *CHARACTERISTICS OF GEORGE HENRY LEWES.*

(1851.)

GEORGE HENRY LEWES was intellectually the bravest man I have known. It was not that he was without the wisdom which looks around to see what the consequences of any act would be ; but where a thing seemed right in itself he ignored the consequences of doing it. He did not dare the consequences ; he did not recognize them. They were to him as though they were not. When he accepted a principle, he accepted all that belonged to it. Courage means facing a danger by force of will, facing danger which you know to be such. Men of natural intrepidity never take danger into account, or, if they are conscious of it, it only influences them as an inspiration of action. Mr. Lewes had intellectual intrepidity of this kind. This was my experience and impression of his character which I gave George Eliot at the time of his death.

Most persons regard toleration as a reluctant necessity ; others regard it as an unpleasant duty which they nevertheless have to discharge, and they apologise for their concession by diminishing the credibility of those they condescend to recognize, by pointing out—as even W. J. Fox did in one instance—that anti-Theistic belief is due to some mental deficiency. Lewes did nothing of the kind. He regarded toleration as a right of others. It was he who proposed that my name should appear on the published list of contributors to the *Leader* newspaper, which was attended with polemical consequences that the reader has seen recounted.

Mr. Lewes, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, wrote a charming

book, and did not appear to know it, and afterwards superseded it by a work which never interested the same readers. Mr. Spencer published "Social Statics," which interested readers wherever the English language was intelligible; and this he superseded by "Principles of Sociology," which was only intelligible to a limited class of advanced thinkers. About the same time, Mr. Lewes wrote a "Biography of Philosophy," in four shilling volumes, for Charles Knight, and presented me with the set, in which he inscribed his name. The book fascinated all students who were beginning to turn their attention to philosophy. To this day, all who possess the original volumes value them highly. Mr. Lewes afterwards reproduced the work, with all the erudite illustrations and authorities with which he was so familiar. It is valued by scholars, but is beyond the appreciation of the far larger class whom he had first interested, instructed, and inspired.

Lewes had few rivals as a conversationalist. But he told me ne found one once. He was invited by W. J. Fox to meet, at his house, Margaret Fuller, afterwards Countess Ossoli. Carlyle was another guest that night. Fox, Carlyle, and Lewes were famous talkers; but when Margaret Fuller took her turn they were all silenced, and—their turn came no more.

When in America I met with an interesting instance of the regard in which Mr. Lewes's writings were held by backwoodsmen, who told me they had read them by camp fires at night—books which were then far from popular in England.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### *PERTURBATION IN WHITEHAVEN.*

(1851.)

THE writer does not forget that the reader can take little interest in episodes of controversial turbulence (these not being uncommon) except as illustrating the manners of the period. Milton says that "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than War." But they *are* less renowned, and in most cases not renowned at all. The battles for opinion, however, have some popular interest when they take a fighting form. Robert Owen, the most mild, abstract-speaking, gracious-mannered unaggressive propagandist who ever appeared, was often met by outrage in his time. He, nevertheless, by having declared "all the religions of the world" to be wrong, did not reserve for himself a friend in any church. He excited all against him; and, nothing loath, they went as far in rebuking their philosophical adversary as the popular idea of Christian charity—not much restraining in those days—would warrant.

Shortly before I went to Worcester as a lecturer on Owen's views, he was encountered at a public meeting by the then Dr. Retford,<sup>1</sup> who before a large audience made a gesture of outrage at Mr. Owen undescribable here. Mr. Owen, being a philanthropist who had spent life and fortune in the service of the people, did not mitigate anger at his intellectual errors which were attempted to be confuted in this unpleasant way. Dr. Retford's energetic behaviour was the talk of every citizen in Worcester when I was there, many of whom had witnessed the act. The doctor had a son who became art critic of the *Daily News*, and was a man of tolerant and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Dr. George Retford, Congregationalist minister.

gentlemanly manners. The preceding incident is merely mentioned as an illustration of the theological ways of a cathedral city when I entered the field of controversy. It is in a cathedral city, with its divine advantages, that you expect the perfect thing in Christianity—but civility is not always one of them.

When mischief was intended to me personally it never came to much. My protection was often my voice. Had I been capable of speaking in strident and imperious tones, my opinions would have been counted highly objectionable. Believing with Leigh Hunt that "the errors of men proceeded more from defect of knowledge than defect of goodness," it seemed the best course to explain the reasons for any new opinion. Thus some listened from curiosity, and those who were not interested were not irritated.

In 1851, in consequence of a magisterial decision in Whitehaven, I volunteered to go down there and speak upon it. Mr. James Hughan, a Unitarian street-lecturer, speaking at the Bulwark on the harmless subject of "Progression," was knocked down by one Charles Flinn, who had been twice before convicted of assaults; but on this occasion, the Rev. F. W. Wicks being on the bench, Flinn was dismissed and Mr. Hughan censured as having "incited" the man by his address. The reputation of others who had been before me, rather than my own, caused me to be regarded with hostility. A Social Missionary who believed in sensationalism had issued a placard, giving the inhabitants the unwelcome intimation that "The Devil and Socialism were in the town." It was not necessary to do this, as the clergy had suggested to the people that the two creatures went about together. All the lecturer had in view was to dispute the existence of that disagreeable personage, and to explain that, if indeed he *was* about, the Social System of Robert Owen was disconnected from him. The lecturer's irritating announcement had a meritorious motive. Since the attack of the Bishop of Exeter, which caused even in Birmingham the resignation of the Registrar, the clergy had been an intimidating force in every town, and many alarmed and prudent persons had denied their opinions or explained them away in self-protection. Therefore, open, even ostentatious, defiance had merit, and some justification

from the point of view of self-respect. It had, however, rendered the town angry and resentful. Unfortunately Mr. Lennon—a courageous sea-rover, an abstainer from alcohol (rare in seaport men then), and well respected for intelligence and character—who had made arrangements for my visit—broke a blood vessel a week before my arrival. The animosity shown to him living was not mitigated by his death, and the burial service was refused over his remains. The religious riots which my predecessors had occasioned were censured by Sir James Graham, who always had the fairness and boldness to rebuke intolerance.

It had not, however, subsided when I entered the town and my friends showed, in their countenances and speech dismal apprehensions. That there was some unusual dread in the air was evident from the fact that the women shared it. Hitherto I had found them, under circumstances of danger, to be the last to utter words of discouragement, but here they helped to diffuse the panic. This led me to avoid the houses of friends whom I should otherwise have visited lest I compromised them. The Irish population were dreaded, and their prejudices were known to be above the reach of reason, and the population of Lord Lonsdale's collieries were no less causes of alarm. It was in vain that I urged that the charges of admission should be raised, which would keep out the more dangerous disturbers. The answer was they would force the door. "If they do," I said, "they cannot reach the stage to interrupt the lecture." "They say they will come armed with stones, and throw at the speaker, and chairman, and whoever is on the stage," was the unpleasant assurance given me. Thinking that so much ingenuity ought not to lack appropriate exercise, I arranged to be my own chairman, and to exclude the committee from the stage, so that, the objects to be thrown at being reduced to one, it might be more to the credit of the mob if they hit it. The proprietor of the theatre sent word that there would be a disturbance, and he demanded payment for both nights before we occupied the place. Some religious Whitehaven men, who were friendly to me personally, had told me in Newcastle-on-Tyne that I should not be heard in their town, and it would be no use going there. When there, appearances looked very much like it.

On the day of the lecture a man went into the shop of a respectable tradesman in Whitehaven, and said, "the theatre would be pulled down that night." The serjeant of police had been heard saying that "there would be blood and slaughter in the theatre, and he should order his men to keep out of the way, as they were not going to get their heads broken." A friend of mine, whom I asked to call at the Police Office with a request that two policemen should be at the door, received a more assuring answer. The superintendent said he would be on that beat and would pass the theatre every five minutes, and look in as often as his duty allowed.

As my engagement was to lecture, I was precluded from feeling apprehension until afterwards. I had long seen that there never could be a quarrel unless there were two parties to it—not even on the platform—and *I* was not going to be one. Experience showed me that men of the rudest nature seldom break out into outrage at once; they act on, indeed often wait for, some pretext or provocation, and if this is not afforded they are confused and do nothing. Anyhow it was most foolish to go about telling every one that an attack was expected; since, if it did not occur, we should be in a manner bound to get up one ourselves, to prevent public disappointment.

One incident occurred which seems ludicrous now, but was lawful then. At that time white hats were in fashion, and a friend in Newcastle had given me one of white silk. The newest gloss of unworn brightness was upon it, and my itinerant wardrobe fortunately included a new coat. In this attire I walked out to inspect the foe. In practice we know divinity doth hedge a gentleman as well as a king, and there was reason to think that appearances might find a response where principle would find none. So it transpired. The local mob made way for me, and those who would have knocked me down had I worn a "seedy" aspect, stepped involuntarily out of the way. Many did not suspect me of being the invading lecturer, and those who did, finding me respectable, surmised I might have friends, and it might not be so safe as they thought to assault me.

When the hour of the lecture came, I was at the theatre, saw to the lights, and that the door was manned by groups of able-bodied friends, placed as much out of sight as possible,

that no provocation might occur. Others diffused themselves over the theatre where Christians were thickest, holding themselves ready either to listen to the lecture or restrain an attack, if a party issued from near them. Wherever two or three militant Christians were gathered together, there was a sentinel in the midst of them. The precautions we took would have been superfluous in orthodox persons, who, having mansions in the skies, see in death but an agreeable change of residence; but to others, no less hopeful, but not so certain as to a celestial manor house, manslaughter amounts to apprehensive disinheritance, and therefore they decline that casualty when obtruded upon them prematurely. Certainly I did not want to fight the people of Whitehaven. I went to reason with them. It was not part of my taste to die in Whitehaven. Besides, if a man is to be killed in an irregular way, he ought to be indulged in his choice of the place and the selection of his own executioner.

The first lecture was well received. The audience included ladies; the gallery was filled, the pit moderately, and the boxes were just inhabited. The *Whitehaven Herald* gave a very fair report of my address, which disarmed the prejudice of the intelligent part of the town. My subject was, "The Moral Innocency of Speculative Opinion, even the most extreme, when conscientiously entertained, setting forth how far a man might dissent from the Religious Opinions of his Neighbours, and yet hope to live in Truth and die in Peace." The latter part had reference to the death of Lennon. My expectations were verified as to the audience. They were astonished at not being outraged, and they saw that a speaker might promote conviction without putting the "Devil" on his placard. My argument was one they could not fight and did not answer. All the discussion amounted to was a few feeble speeches, and a few reluctant admissions. The trick was tried of asking me whether "I believed the Bible to be the revealed will of God!" "Whether I believed in the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ." I answered that they should know my opinions on those subjects quickly enough, should I have an opportunity of speaking upon them in Whitehaven. For the present, while I was obliged by the expression of their curiosity, I must confine myself to the subject on the placard, or the

public would complain that under the pretext of speaking on one subject I had introduced others. It might gratify me and them to talk about anything else, but there was something higher than gratification, and that was good faith; and, as nothing more had to be said on the proper topic of the night, I, thanking them for their attention, closed the meeting, when the speeches of debate had occupied us perhaps three-quarters of an hour.

On the second night our fortifications were the same. It had, however, become known that the police were not likely to interfere. Some persons appeared at the door inciting the people to riot, and, as there were three clergymen on the magistrates' bench, the police could calculate on their sanction of the violation of duty. The new audience were turbulent. Mr. Stuart Potter, a Wesleyan local preacher, was very noisy until some one stopped his mouth by laying a heavy hand upon it. A grey-headed adversary in front of the gallery threw his arms about as though his intention was to throw stones. Like a steam arm, his appeared to move independently of the will of the owner, and had a suspicious activity. Two persons walked on to the stage to enjoy the advantage of closer intercourse with me, but, suspecting the enjoyment might not be mutual, I refused to answer any questions until they resumed their places below. Another man clambered on the stage who seemed to meditate some personal attention to me. I assured him I was sensible of the consideration he showed me by the trouble he was taking to come to me, but I preferred to conduct the meeting without assistance.

Thus ended the adventure in Whitehaven. I left the town next day under the impression that the "beasts of Ephesus" had propagated their species.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### *THE VICAR OF FLEET STREET.*

(1852.)

WHEN a publisher in Fleet Street, a demand was made upon me for tithes. When the demand was first made, it astounded me. I, who once proposed to walk ninety miles to see the Rev. George Harris, because of his great sermon against the Rathcormac massacre—I, who, then dreading the Unitarian faith, yet honoured the Unitarian minister whose eloquent denunciations made tithes hateful for ever—I pay tithes? Well, the tithes on “147” were £2 8s. or £2 10s. a-year, or more. The first quarter was 12s. 8d. As I entered at the half-quarter, half was the affair of Mr. Carvalho, my predecessor. He, though a Jew, paid tithes. I was bound to fulfil my agreement as to taxes with Mr. Carvalho, and I paid the 12s. 8d., which I regarded as so much blood-money after what I had read of the manner of their collection in Ireland. In due time I was served with a tithe notice on my own account. I said, “What I might do when I was forced to do something I could not tell, but no tithe should I pay until forced, and not then if I could help it.”

A gentleman was sent to me to explain that the parish of St. Bride, or the City, had sold the tithe to Sir Edward Somebody’s ancestors two centuries ago, and that certain civil advantage accrued to Fleet Street in consequence, and I was merely paying for *that*. I answered that “neither City nor parish had sold my conscience; and if they had sold the tithe, why did he come collecting it?”

Clergymen in debate upon the French Revolution had frequently shown how Atheists attempted spoliation of church property. If that were so, was it less discreditable, I asked,

than the Church in the plenitude of its power, in the affluence of its wealth, in days of peace, unprovoked by any antagonism, uncited by any want, descending upon a house in Fleet Street and carrying away the property of an "atheist."

Whether my representations were faithfully reported to the Vicar of Fleet Street, I had no means of knowing. He made me no visit, and I was too busy to call upon him. No instance was known to me in which any demand for tithes was ever mitigated by argument or remonstrance. A notice was sent me that unless the tithe claim was paid on demand there would be a distraint. The demand was not paid, and a seizure of goods took place. The officers had some difficulty in making a selection of what to seize. The books in my shop were heretical, or philosophical with an heretical tendency, and the Church had some misgiving as to the seemliness of becoming salesmen at an auction of works of a very unclerical character. Their agents, therefore, went roaming about the house in search of something better to their taste. One year they took my clock. In the printing office they found another time some reams of blank paper, which they thought they could sell with a clear conscience. They had a conscience, such as it was, about the propriety of selling heterodox publications, but no conscience as to the propriety of taking my property as a penalty on my convictions. Whether the proceeds of the sale exceeded, as it ought to have done, the demands made against me, no surplus was returned to me. Some years three or four times the value of the rate was taken.

Satisfied with the result of their raids, they continued to come again. As the paper seized the year before was found in the printing office—my brother Austin's department—he said reasonably he would not have them there again, as they had no right to seize things in his office for a claim against me. Nor did I feel like wishing to pay again for what they might seize another year. I therefore resolved to meet this ecclesiastical demand in a proper ecclesiastical manner, which I hoped would be agreeable to the vicar. When notice of another distraint came, I told the officer "I should pay this year, and send the amount to the vicar." The vicar, on hearing this, no doubt regarded it as a sign of wholesome repentance on the part of his refractory parishioner.

In due course I wrote to the vicar stating that, as it was proper to tender tithes "in kind," as editor and publisher of the *Reasoner* I forwarded him three volumes of that work—they being the "kind" of property produced on my farm. Three volumes likely to interest his reverence were chosen. The "trade price" of them was more than the demand. The vicar was therefore asked for a receipt "in full" for that year's tithes. The vicar did not find it lawful or seemly to refuse this mode of payment; whether he was gratified by it I never heard. He sent me no receipt and no demand for the payment of tithes any more. I consoled myself for the virtual act of payment by the hope that I might have accomplished an act of salutary propagandism, as, for all I knew, the vicar might present the books to the vestry library.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### *THE COWPER STREET DEBATE—FIGURES ON THE PLATFORM.*

(1853.)

No truth can be fully trusted until it has been fully discussed in fair and equal contention. Milton thought truth was never worsted in a "free and open encounter." But debate may be "free" and not fair. It may be "open," and yet one-sided if the disputants have unequal advantages. For want of all-round watchfulness in these respects truth has often been put down within my experience. In the Cowper Street debate the conditions were equal, excepting, perhaps, that my adversary was provided with an income, and I had to earn one otherwise, during the six weeks the discussion lasted.

As the report of what took place appeared in a half-crown volume, of which forty-five thousand were sold ; as purchasers still survive, and copies exist in public libraries, a description of the affair will be relevant here. The debate took place in 1853, which will soon be forty years since ; thus the subject may have novelty if not interest to this generation.

The Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, was the promoter of this discussion. In the *Reasoner*, which I edited, a new form of Freethought had been originated, to which the name of "Secularism" was given. Some took this to be a new name for an old thing, whereas it was a new name for a new conception. Many had shown that morality resting on theology was not universally accepted. We maintained that morality

resting on material and social facts was a force among all people. We were the first who taught that the secular was sacred. This was the new conception to which the new name was given.

This form of opinion accepted the ethical precepts of Christianity, so far as they were consonant with the welfare of society. The word secular was taken as George Combe defined it—as implying “those issues which can be tested by the experience of this life.” This doctrine of conduct is now widely accepted by Christian preachers as being good—so far as it goes. It was not approved then, and a Dissenting preacher, one Rev. Brewin Grant, of fine disputative faculty, was sent out on a “three years’ mission” to arrest the dissemination of the new principles. The rev. gentleman had manifest courage, pertinacity, and ceaseless fertility in objection, but the scrupulousness which commands respect was not so conspicuous. In earlier years there was a Socialist Society in Leicester, and Mr. Grant, then a youth in a hosiery warehouse, used to make smart speeches after the lectures—as discussion was always encouraged by the social reformers, who held that truth was best elicited by comparison of ideas. The vivacity of the youthful disputant brought him into notice, and the elders of the Congregational Church thought they saw in him the making of a defender of the faith. He was sent to college by them, and the alertness in controversy he manifested led to his being sent out on the aforesaid “mission.”

The Rev. Dr. Ackworth, of Bradford, had challenged me to a “foot-to-foot encounter,” which I afterwards engaged in. It was determined that a debate in London should have precedence. It was to the credit of Mr. Grant’s manliness that he was willing to enter the lists in London, where what he took to be error was mainly promulgated, and that he was willing to meet the advocate who was held to be the originator of the new heresy in a six nights’ discussion on six successive Thursday evenings, from January 20 to February 24, 1853.

Mr. Grant could have no misgiving in meeting me. The apprehension ought to have been all on my side, for he had informed the public that he had “silenced” Cardinal Newman. Conceive Brewin Grant silencing Cardinal Newman, who crushed Professor Kingsley between two sentences! The

Cardinal was then known as John Henry Newman. When he delivered his famous lectures to the Oratorians of St. Philip Neri, Mr. Grant announced that he had compelled him "to take down his flag and reduce his lectures from twelve to nine." It does not appear that Dr. Newman ever took the slightest notice of Mr. Grant, but this did not concern him whose contentment with himself was immeasurable, and who mistook the Cardinal's contempt for terror.

Mr. Grant's discussion with me was held in the Cowper Street School rooms. His committee was the Rev. Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*; Rev. Robert Ashton, Samuel Morley, S. Priestly, and J. S. Crisp. My committee was James Watson, Richard Moore, my brother Austin, and the Rev. Ebenezer Syme. Mr. Samuel Morley acted as chairman for Mr. Grant, the Rev. E. Syme was chairman for me, and the Rev. Howard Hinton was umpire.

The Rev. Howard Hinton, the umpire, was a distinguished Congregational preacher, who looked upon Christianity with the eye of a philosopher, as well as that of a believer. He was in Congregational divinity what Sir Benjamin Brodie was in medicine—dispassionate and many-sided in his knowledge. His son, James Hinton, became eminent both as an aurist and a thinker. His work on the "Mystery of Pain" is still in the minds of men. Some years after the debate I had the pleasure to meet him at dinner, at the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke's, when I was impressed by his searching power of thought, as others had been. As I walked with him to his door that night, he referred to his father's admission made in one of his discourses upon the discussion—that some of my arguments were entitled to consideration, naming one where I pointed out that the evangelical doctrine of motives was a pathless wilderness. It was this: First, a young inquirer is told to observe moral duties; then he is told he cannot do that, or anything good, unless God first disposes him; then that whatever good works he performs will be of no avail unless he also believes; then that he cannot believe unless God gives him grace to believe; then that God will not give him this grace of belief unless he asks Him; and then that he cannot ask Him effectually unless he already has the grace of faith, which is the very thing he has to ask for.

Mr. Grant's chairman was, as I have said, Mr. Samuel Morley, who became the great leader of the Nonconformist party. He was a man of truth and fairness first, and a Christian afterwards. He would have ascribed these high qualities to his Christianity, but as they were conspicuous in him, in a degree beyond that of his co-religionists, I judged them to be inherent. Some years afterwards he sent me £5 through his secretary, the Rev. Mr. Price, to assist in procuring a law of Secular Affirmation, as the Christian oath was then obligatory as a condition of legal justice—which justice was refused to all who had conscientious scruples as to solemnly professing a faith they did not hold. In acknowledging the subscription in the *Reasoner*, I omitted the name of the giver, as I had reason to know it would subject him to the necessity of explanation and misconception.

A valued friend of mine, who was a student in the Congregational College supported by Mr. Morley, acquired other convictions, and accepted an appointment in a rural Unitarian Church, which afforded but a slender salary. Mr. Morley, knowing that he had done this for conscience' sake, sent him a cheque for £100, although it must have deeply pained Mr. Morley that a Congregational College student should become a Unitarian preacher. There were other instances known to me in which Mr. Morley generously assisted political and social movements, although he knew that those engaged in them differed widely from himself. He seemed to think that progress by reason was compatible with Christianity, although its incentive was purely secular.

As an employer, he had regard to the welfare of his workmen, as they often told me ; and his manufactures, known for their genuineness, exalted the character of British industry. While other philanthropists whom I have known, having the honourable ambition of usefulness, would reserve their wealth to make one splendid gift that would bring them renown, and let hundreds perish in their day, whose lives they could have cheered and extended—Mr. Morley, by countless acts of unostentatious kindness, diffused happiness among the living, less fortunate than himself, who could never requite him, nor would the world ever know of the service he rendered them. This form of kindness always seems higher to me than any form of

monumental benevolence to posterity, which commands larger public admiration. He who is the friend of his contemporaries may, on entering another world, expect to meet many who will accord him grateful welcome, while he who has given thought only for those who may live after him, will meet no one who knows him. Those who have had no regard for the born nor the unborn, neither gods nor men will have any interest in knowing ; and those who have lived only for themselves may rightly be left to perish by themselves.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*, became friendly to me until his death, and his son was equally so after him ; so that the discussion has many pleasant memories to me. Mr. J. S. Crisp, connected with Ward and Co., the publishers, showed impartiality and judgment in seeing the debate through the press, and each month for nine months I and Mr. Grant received £5 each on every one thousand of the debate printed. We each received £45 altogether.

The Rev. Ebenezer Syme, my chairman, was at that time assistant to Dr. John Chapman and sub-editor of the *Westminster Review*. He was the brother of the Rev. Alexander Syme, of Nottingham, also a Congregational minister, with whom I had debated with instruction to myself, and for whom I conceived regard.

In the debate Mr. Grant professed that I had commended works from which he had rather not read passages. I demanded that he should do it. He would not, but called upon me to do it ; whereupon the Rev. E. Syme, my chairman, rose and promptly undertook to read every passage Mr. Grant wished provided he would read an equal number of passages from the Old Testament which Mr. Syme would select. This relevant and decisive offer was not accepted. It made a lasting impression on the great assembly, and thus that episode ended. It was an instance of Mr. Grant's ingenuity to urge that I should read his illustrations, whereby the time of my speech would be entirely taken up in presenting his case instead of my own.

The general subject was—"What advantages would accrue to mankind generally, and the working class in particular, by the removal of Christianity and the substitution of Secularism in its place?" The pretentious and misleading words "the removal of Christianity" were my adversary's invention. Five

years before, I had elsewhere insisted that our object was to contest the *error*, not the *truth*, which was included in Christianity ; whereas to remove it all would be to remove the good as well as the evil. But at no time could we induce adversaries (not even one so amiable as the Rev. H. Townley) to discuss our propositions as we expressed them ; and we had to accept their wording (which was always against us) or forego the advantage of debate. Mr. Morley, with his usual frankness, admitted that I had, in committee, objected to the interpolated words. In the discussion I refused to accept the sweeping responsibility. What I maintained was the secular principle that duties of this life which we know should take precedence over those of another which we do not know ; that in human affairs science is the providence of man, that morality rests upon foundations purely human ; that escape from the penalties of sin by the death of another is not good in principle nor in example ; and that where Scriptural precepts appear to conflict, guidance can only come by selection.

In the debate I spoke of my early pastor, the Rev. John Angell James, with a respect due to one who was for many years the minister of my mother, and because of the way in which he had spoken of me, at a time when one less generous might have used disparaging words. Mr. Grant, conceding nothing to this sentiment, charged me with inconsistency in the expression of it. He construed courtesy into an offence. On the other hand the Rev. Thomas Binney wrote to me to assure me that he thought my expressions of regard for my former pastor creditable to me. Mr. Binney, himself a Newcastle-on-Tyne man, was one of the figures of the platform. He wrote afterwards a notable little book entitled "How to Make the Best of Both Worlds." He was the first preacher in my time who admitted and enforced the secular side of New Testament teaching. He had natural vigour of expression, boldness, and humour. He had the true genius of the preacher ; he was inspired by his subject and his audience. I once heard him make a remarkable speech in the Town Hall, Birmingham. Many wanted him to publish it, but he answered it was impossible. He said he did not foresee what he should say, and could never recall what he had said. I think he was like Sojourner Truth, the famous negress preacher

of America, who said what she spoke the Lord put into her mouth at the time, and she did not know before she began what it would be. She said the audience went to hear her, and she came to hear herself, that she might know what the Lord had to say to her.

My reverend opponent conducted his part of the discussion entirely to his own satisfaction. It was one of the endowments of Mr. Grant to be always satisfied with himself. He had advantage over me in his rapidity of speech. He boasted that he should talk three times as fast as I should, and so have three times more pages in the report, not reflecting that his velocity rendered it beyond the power of the hearer to follow him. He was the nimblest opponent I ever met, but he never bit your arguments; he only nibbled at them. He was rabbit-minded, with a scavenger's eye for the refuse of old theological controversy. With him epithets were arguments. I was made answerable for whatever could be found in any book I had reviewed favourably, and for every sentiment expressed by writers and correspondents in fourteen volumes of the *Reasoner* I had edited! "There was nothing meaner than a mask, and nothing viler than the purpose for which we wore it," was one thing he said in terms of polished force, but his general epithets were below the level of street-corner coarseness. Regarding personal invective as a digression in argument, I did not reciprocate this language. Had I imitated my adversary's epithets, it would have been ascribed to the viciousness of my principles; while his invective would be counted as "holy wrath" in him. Observation of conflicts and controversy had taught me that he who strikes the first blow begins a fight, because a blow oft obliges another in self-defence. It is the second person in a dispute who begins a quarrel. Not even a lunatic can keep up a dispute with himself. He who, in discussion, explains his case and does not retort, makes a quarrel impossible, and his adversary who seeks it appears a disorderly person. This, in the end, Mr. Grant came to appear in the eyes of his friends.

I had contended that there were two Christs in the New Testament—Christ the Gentle and Christ the Austere. Had Mr. Grant given the audience the right of choice, he would have made converts where he made none. Unless the spirit of

the present is breathed into the letter of the past, stagnation petrifies the minds of men. As Lord Houghton wrote—

“ So, while the world rolls on from change to change,  
And realms of thought expand,  
The letter stands without expanse or range,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.”

Yet it ought to be owned that the theologian is honest under the fetter of infallible Scripture, when he refuses to depart from the letter. To drop the “letter” is to drop the doctrine. To “expand” the letter is to change it. New “range” means new thought which, in this insidious way, is put forward to supersede the old. The frank thing is to say so, and admit that the “letter” is obsolete—is gone—is disproved and that new views which are truer constitute the new letter of progress. The best thing to do with the “dead hand” is to bury it. To try to expand dissolution and life is tying the dead to the living.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### *THE DISSENTING CHAMPION WHO DESERTED HIS SUPPORTERS.*

(1854-1869.)

SOME readers of the *Newcastle Chronicle* asked for the sequel to the Cowper Street debate. The story is brief. The Congregationalist leaders who promoted Mr. Grant's Three Years' Mission did not extend the term of his services. Some said and more thought that his mode of controversy was not calculated to win adherents to the cause he represented.

Afterwards the Nonconformist body beheld a transformation scene none could have expected. Their champion deserted them and their cause, and wrote a book against them entitled "The Dissenting World," which the *Athenæum* (October 16, 1869) described as "overflowing with spite, vanity, insolence, and coarse derision." So I was not alone in considering him a minister of peculiar ways. His book made it plain to his friends that unjust epithets imply an unjust spirit. He afterwards obtained admission into the Church of England. It was said of the late Dr. Adler, the great Rabbi, that when an importunate Jew threatened to go and be converted if his wishes were not complied with, the Rabbi offered to pay for a cab that he might arrive at the place of conversion speedily, before he changed his mind. Mr. Grant's colleagues were quite as willing to expedite his transference to the Church. I will, however, do him the justice to say that he had one merit, rare in an adversary of that day : he would at times quote fully and fairly what you said. But when he came to put his interpretation upon it, you did not know it again. His powers of seeing things unexpressed

and unimplied would have entitled him to a gold medal, if such honour were provided for such attainments. When the preliminaries of the Cowper Street debate were being arranged, he asked me to meet him, which I declined to do. As he had described me as one not to be trusted on my word, an interview seemed useless. If I was what he asserted, he could not be interested in my company, and, if he believed what he had said, I could not be interested in his.

A year or so later I was invited by the Rev. Dr. Rutherford to breakfast at his house. To my surprise Mr. Grant appeared at table. In the course of conversation with Mr. Grant, I said, "he had precluded himself from friendly intercourse, unless he felt justified in retracting publicly what he had said publicly." I added, "Were I to apply to you the epithets you apply to me, discussion would be a bear garden of invective." He at once rejoined, "I wish you would," which showed his good judgment. Had I, representing infantine and unfriended opinions against full-grown popular orthodoxy, descended to his level, I should have been lost.

In 1854 I joined in a further discussion with Mr. Grant for six nights in the City Hall, Glasgow. Friends of mine in that city had invited the Rev. Dr. Wm. Anderson, affectionately called "Willie Anderson" by the people. Vigorous in speech and wilful in opinion, he had taken the side of Garibaldi, Kossuth, and Mazzini on the platform. In after years pleasant words from him came to me through Mr. Logan, a city missionary, whom I first knew at Bradford; but in 1854 Dr. Anderson had no friendly opinion of me, thought Mr. Grant good enough to meet me, and advised his being sent for, and thus the Glasgow discussion with him came about.

An attempt was made to get me to discuss Reign of Terror questions in which atrocity was attributed to me in the terms of the propositions. This I declined, preferring, as fairer and more instructive, a form of question which implied the comparative reasonableness of our opposing opinions. On one night during the discussion I received a telegram that my wife was attacked by cholera in London. Had I left Glasgow to visit her, Mr. Grant would have represented me as running away, and that he had silenced me, as he said he had Cardinal Newman, who had never exchanged a word with him. One night

for half an hour I showed how my opponent's cause might be made to appear did I pursue the same course toward him as he pursued towards us. His friends were very uneasy. That method which they applauded when applied to me did not seem so interesting when applied to themselves. Mr. Southwell and other friends of mine loudly applauded this half hour's retaliation, but I went no further. It was sufficient to show that it was possible to meet Mr. Grant on his own ground and in his own way. But when the way is a bad way, it is not profitable to truth to walk therein. Discussion is brought into distrust and contempt when it is seen to be a struggle to overthrow an adversary instead of to overthrow error.

Enough has been said, perhaps more than enough, of the epithets Mr. Grant employed in the London and Glasgow debates. A list of them which I had prepared is omitted, as they are not edifying, and they failed in effect, even in Scotland, where theologians used to keep a large variety on hand. Mr. John Brown, of the *Citizen*, whom I did not then know, pointed out that they did not answer their purpose, and that strangers to the disputants in the City Hall took me to be the Christian and Mr. Grant to be the other person. But there is no profit in dwelling upon controversial imputation except on the Irish principle—"that the only way to prevent what is past is to stop it before it happens."

## CHAPTER L.

### *ADVENTURES WHERE ADVENTURES ARE NOT COUNTED POSSIBLE.*

(1854-1884.)

FEW persons think that there are adventures in controversy as well as on sea or land. To be murderously assailed in the dark by one who mistakes you for some one else passes for an adventure by common consent. But, in controversy by pen or speech, a man may be mistaken as to what he means and be assassinated in open day. An attack upon character may be more serious than an attack upon life, but is accounted little noteworthy.

It has been said, with the frequency of a proverb, that the lives of literary-minded men are distinguished by few adventures. That is because only one kind of adventures is thought of ; yet there are intellectual adventures as strange, as dramatic, and as full of fatalities as those of the physical kind.

How many family feuds and party feuds have arisen from a single saying, perhaps spoken in anger, in most cases never intended to be understood in the sense it was taken. Yet incurable animosity has come of it, and a vendetta which has lasted for years through the lives of a family or the duration of a party. The fortunes of a Cabinet, the reputation of a minister, the fate of a dynasty have sometimes turned on a phrase creating extinguishable resentments. Carlton has suggested the danger of words in notable lines :—

“ Boys flying kites haul in their white winged birds,  
You can't do that way when you're flying words—  
Careful with fire is good advice we know :  
Careful with words is ten times doubly so.

Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall back dead,  
But God Himself can't kill them when they're said."

Very gradually I found this out.

As a social missionary, I was often called upon to give names to infants before the congregation in our lecture halls. Sometimes foolish names were proposed ; sometimes I was responsible for them.

Wanting a name for writing purposes that did not suggest my own, I selected "Landor Praed." Landor I took because the brief, vigorous, clear style of Landor were useful to me to bear in mind. Using Landor as a Christian name would not, I thought, strike any one as an affectation of his qualities. For a surname Praed seemed convenient, being brief and obscure. I took it from a Paddington omnibus which ran to "Praed Street," a street I had never been in and thought little known. After a while I found there was a banker of that name in Fleet Street, and, what was worse, there was a Winthrop Mackworth Praed whom more people knew than knew Praed Street, and some thought his name intentionally chosen.

Afterwards I observed that Mr. Washington Wilks, some time editor of the *Morning Star*, was disparaged, in respect of qualities he really possessed, because his sphere of activity did not enable him to sustain the portentous pretension of the name of "Washington." But graver misadventures befel me.

In 1852 a proposal was made for a shilling subscription in aid of European freedom, to be placed at the discretionary disposal of Kossuth and Mazzini on behalf of Hungary and Italy. Viscount Gooderich, Thornton Hunt, Douglas Jerrold, Professor Newman, and James Stansfeld were on the committee, on which my name also appeared. I published in the *Reasoner* the manifesto relating thereto, and did all I could to give effect to it. By aid of the personality of Mazzini it was evident that money could be had. Therefore I asked him to write me a letter. He did so, and I soon collected one thousand shillings, then another thousand, and so on until nine thousand were sent to me. Correspondence, acknowledgment and transmission of the money was done by me at the cost of a  $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. to the fund. My brother Austin, with his usual ardour, took a great share of the labour this involved. We had the pleasure of remitting to the great triumvir £450.

There was one, however (W. J. Linton), as desirous as myself to see the subscription succeed, who became my enemy because I did not effect the collection in his name—which was not possible.

The same writer addressed a letter to the *Star of Freedom* saying that "our friend 'Ion' who writes in the *Leader*, has accepted the office of touter in ordinary to the 'Walmsley Incapables,' and serves them from time to time with his most careful emssculations, from the once free-speaking 'Ion,' to the foolishest, tiredest Chartist, who means only to 'take what he can get,' on 'Ion's' recommendation."

I was the subject also of an epigram from the same pen which represented me as once deserving the name of *Iron* from the unyieldingness of my arguments; but now the *r* was well dropped out in "Ion" since I had become flaccid and nerveless.

Among the many who have from time to time done me the service of being my friends, I must often have created confusion and even distrust in their regard by acts the effects of which were unforeseen and which I went on committing when I did see the effect. Among every man's friends there are some who are less discerning than others, and judge by impression or prepossession, without looking at the facts of the case. For instance, when I spoke in favour of Lord Elcho at St. Martin's Hall meeting, it seemed to many that I was more influenced by the pleasure of so appearing than by honesty of opinion. Lord Elcho in 1852 had said things in the House of Commons from which I, as well as my colleagues of the National Reform League, dissented; but at the same time he volunteered to attend an indignation meeting convened by us, to listen to what had to be said against him, and reply face to face. I thought this manly then, and I think so still. He acknowledged the right of the working class to judge his conduct, and in meeting them to defend what he said he paid them a tribute which contradicted his apparent estimate of them, and atoned in some measure for his wrong judgment of them. At the same time he had supported in the House a proposal for an Intelligence Franchise in favour of which I had written public letters to Lord John Russell.

At the same meeting Professor Beesley declared—amid the foolish applause of the meeting—that he would not go across

Long Acre, in which street the hall stood, to vote in behalf of any Reform Bill, if it did not include the social improvement of the working classes. I was in favour of a Reform Bill without any conditions, because it was better to have political reform if you could get it, without social reform, than to postpone political reform until you could have them both together. Professor Beesley's doctrine would delay political redress until some scheme of social redress was agreed upon (which at that time was not formulated), whereas enfranchisement would place in the hands of the people a powerful and constitutional instrument for forcing social redress to the front, when the people clearly understood what they wanted. My being in favour of obtaining what we could get exposed me to the accusation of being unfriendly to entire enfranchisement, of which I was more in favour than Professor Beesley, who, being a Comtist, was against the people having political power.

My willingness to accept an Intelligence Franchise arose from seeing that it would admit at once the most advanced artizans to the electorate, where they could help those below them to enfranchisement. It was not in my mind to accept this limited measure in lieu of the general right of voting, but as an aid to it. If a million could be added to the number of electors, it was treachery to them to prevent their enfranchisement because the larger number could not be included. Lord Elcho, being in favour of an intelligence Franchise, was so far, in my opinion, a friend of the working-class politicians ; and when he appealed to me to say what I thought upon his conduct, it would have been cowardice not to maintain there the principle I had maintained elsewhere. At the same time I said it was strange that Lord Elcho, who had founded the Volunteer force, should give workmen muskets and refuse them votes.

In reply to those at the meeting who represented me as opposed to manhood suffrage, I said that I went further than they, for I had always been an advocate of womanhood suffrage. But this did not help me with my assailants. They regarded me as "throwing in the apple of discord." Thus the civil rights of women was then regarded as an "apple of discord" among Radicals.

At the time of Mr. Foote's imprisonment (1883) for some

heterodox proceeding, Dr. Aveling wrote to me to sign a petition "humbly praying mercy" for Mr. Foote. As this was contrary to English traditions of Freethought, it was not in my way to sign it, unless the person for whom "mercy" was asked wanted it. Then my signature was at his command, as I never made my sense of pride or duty the rule of another. When I was imprisoned, I should have treated him as my worst enemy who put upon me the outrage of asking for "mercy" in my name, without my knowledge or consent. Such a petition implies the renunciation of doing the same thing again. It was to assume Mr. Foote to be a coward without our knowing it, and to act upon the ignominious assumption. In any other way, on ground of injustice, needlessness, or excessiveness of the sentence, I would sign any petition, and said so. Yet Mr. M. D. Conway went to a public meeting at St. James's Hall, and described me, amid outcries, as the only person who would not sign a petition on Mr. Foote's behalf. Mr. Conway, not being an Englishman, might know nothing of the traditions of Freethought among us, and therefore could not be expected to share our sense of freethinking honour, which might be mistaken, but stood up for what it took to be truth—never explained itself away, and never supplicated for mercy.

Nevertheless I addressed the following letter to Sir William Vernon Harcourt, then Home Secretary :—

"SIR,—Two prisoners, Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey, are undergoing excessive sentences. Permit me to give reasons why they should be released. A Freethinker who believes what he is doing to be right, never ceases to do it, equally as his adversaries do. I therefore ask for justice, not 'mercy.' I take Mr. Foote and Mr. Ramsey's method of advocacy to be a principle with them, and therefore I think that their sentences should be terminated as a matter of justice. Blasphemy is the sin of all sects, but only punished in the weakest. There is, however, one thing more repulsive than blasphemy, and that is outrage. I do not pretend that outrage is either undefinable or unpunishable under impartial law. Outrage, as they who commit it know full well, is when any one imputes to others a conscious infamy of belief which they do not hold, and intends to shock, or

irritate, or affront them, regardless whether it pains them or not. This is outrage, and, in the interests of society and good-feeling, should be discouraged. Yet this outrage is constantly committed by Christian preachers and writers against Freethinkers, and the law never steps in to protect them. Since, therefore, the law does not deem it its duty to defend the few against the many, it is not needful or seemly that it should be employed to defend the many against the few. Outrage may be committed in excitement or under provocation, and is then an error rather than a crime ; while outrage, as a method of argument, whether employed by the few or the many, is a polecat policy, which induces every self-regarding person to keep clear of the 'cause' which adopts it, whether it be Freethought or Christianity. Therefore, in a civilized community, intellectual outrage may be left to its own consequences, and needs not that the law should decrease them by sentences which, by exciting public sympathy, obscure the intrinsic hatefulness of the offence. Since the country regards you as a Home Secretary who would not do wrong under intimidation, nor be deterred from doing right by unreflecting prejudice, I venture to submit these considerations to you."

At a later date, when the Queen's Jubilee occurred, I accepted an invitation of Major Dickson, M.P., to be present at the Crystal Palace when the working-class representatives were to send an address to the Queen. In my speech, as reported in *The Times* (June 27, 1887), I said Her Majesty's father, the Duke of Kent, was like his father, George III., before him, a promoter of co-operative self-help. The Prince Consort was a subscriber of £50 a year to a band to play in an East End park on Sundays, so that poor workpeople should have music once a week. The Prince of Wales had, with not less kindness, countenanced and encouraged social progress among the people. The Queen, therefore, was entitled to congratulations on her Jubilee, for these things had not come to pass had she disapproved them.

The *Echo* thought it strange that "I, of all men in London, was celebrating (at the Crystal Palace) the virtues of Prince Albert and the Queen, and thereby magnifying the Crown." My reply to the *Echo* was that these Royal personages I had

named had shown interest in the co-operative and social improvement of the people, and this I acknowledged. I do not see how we can expect these services from those more fortunately placed than ourselves, if we show no appreciation of them. If my enemy did me a friendly thing, I should acknowledge it, though I should combat him, nevertheless, when I thought his acts pernicious. I expressly said, in the remarks I made at the Crystal Palace, "that the power of the Crown is greater than is generally known," and it was because great power had been left to it, and no serious attempt made to diminish it, that the Crown is able, if it chooses, not only to retard, but prevent social progress in various ways. Because it has not done so, but, on the other hand, assisted social freedom, I think a fair ground of Jubilee congratulations had been established. Many things have been done tending to increase the enjoyment of the people, at the instigation of the Prince of Wales, which might not have been done had the Queen disapproved it.

It is not an advantage to be represented as changed in your political convictions, when they remain the same, such imputed change being ascribed to feebleness of intellect or abandonment of principle—to decay of mind or decay of honour—and all because you are just in acknowledgment of the services of others, queens or opponents. It is a maxim in England to "give the devil his due." But England is the only country in which he gets it, as a rule ; but the maxim failed in my case.

No faculty I have has given me more pleasure than laughing at the absurdities of things I like. Let him beware who exercises the faculty. He will have adventures raining upon him. Only he who looks all round the field of propagandism ever sees over which fence the bull is coming. But if he gives warning he will have his own friends rush at him. This has oft befallen me in temperance quarters, but not where Sir Wilfrid Lawson had rule. Once I said, "One of the most insipid, unattractive, underivable, meaningless words which ever stood as the badge of a party is the term "Teetotalism." It neither means total water nor total Souchong. It is weak, alike in sound and sense. But, viewed in the light of the men it has rescued from ruin, it is one of the fairest, brightest, sunniest, sweetest words that ever gladdened eye or ear ; every syllable is illumined and

radiant with social deliverance. But it is often belied, dimmed, and distorted by incapacity and antagonism."

This went for nothing with the *Alliance News*, which long treated me as an enemy of temperance. Because I suggested that a term which endangered the efficiency of an advocacy be changed, it was interpreted among those who were wedded to a term, and were incapable of seeing its consequences, that I objected to the advocacy itself. The term "Teetotal," which never had any meaning, originated in the old Lord Derby's Cockpit in Lancaster. It became afterwards a favourite place of meeting. I myself lectured in it. When Joseph Livesey began to advocate abstinence from intoxicating drinks, an illiterate but honest man, who was first to agree to abstain, explained that he was a total abstainer. But, having an incurable stutter in his speech, he said he was a "t-t-t-total abstainer." Livesey, who did not know what name to call his new adherents by, at once exclaimed, "That is the name we will take—tee-tee-totalers!" This was contracted into tee-totaler. So the ludicrous but useful name came to be adopted.

A term which is good in itself becomes after a time like a coin—battered and defaced by reckless ill-conditioned persons using it—and ought to be sent to the mint of worn-out phrases, a new one being issued.

My dislike to see a good cause made to look absurd brought me many enemies when I advised a change would be an improvement. It was not, as many thought, from egotism or vanity that I did so, but because it seemed to me of more importance that our friends should be in the right than that our adversaries should. Any one who looks no further than into the pamphlet literature of movemnets with which I was connected from 1840 to 1880, will find abundant evidence that there are adventures ludicrous and sometimes tragical connected with the use of words.

## CHAPTER LI.

### *THE TROUBLE WITH QUEEN ANNE.*

(1854-5.)

THE freedom of the press dates from 1693, when the Commons struck out by a special vote the list of temporary acts against the press which were intended to be continued. But restriction upon its liberty by taxation was the persistent device of the governing classes, who were terrified at the apparition of the wilful little printing-press.

The Free Press Terror lasted 142 years. "Twenty years of resolute government" Lord Salisbury thought sufficient to extinguish the spirit of freedom in Ireland. The press was subjected to "resolute restriction" nearly a century and a half, yet it burst its bonds after all. A free press was never a terror to the people—it was their hope. It was the governing classes who were under alarm. The "terror" began and ended in the reign of two women—Queen Anne (the only queen whose death is always treated as absolute) and Queen Victoria. The Anne Tax commenced in 1712; it ceased with Victoria in 1855. The second lady was better than the first, for Victoria repealed what Anne imposed. The press is a spy upon authority and sells its observations to the public. It makes known new ideas before it knows who will be affected by them, and often after it does know. Princes and priests soon saw an enemy in the press. Type was in their opinion the most serious form lead could take. They therefore hit on the compulsory stamp to restrain the issue of papers, which put money into the Crown's purse and limited news. It robbed the reader by making him pay exorbitantly for his paper, and kept the poorer classes

ignorant. Anne put a halfpenny tax on a little sheet and a penny on a larger one. George II., whom Landor says "was always reckoned vile," added a halfpenny to the impost. George III., who was no better, added another halfpenny. A second time he added a halfpenny, and, finding the larceny of the press profitable, he increased the tax three halfpence, raising the stamp to fourpence. I speak of monarchs doing this. By constitutional jugglery it is contrived that no Minister shall be responsible for injustice. The monarch is exonerated under the pretence that Parliament made the law. All the while the people had no control over the House of Commons. When the king set himself against a good measure, it required the menace of a revolution to pass it. He who could resist good was answerable for evil which he permitted. Thus the rich classes—otherwise the conspiring classes—of the State shut out, as far as they could, all knowledge of their doings, alleging that their object was to prevent the dissemination of "heresy and immorality," thus proclaiming their interest in virtue while concealing their political and ecclesiastical vices.

Nothing reminded the world so long and so disagreeably of the existence of Queen Anne as the 10th Act of her malevolent reign. From 1712 to 1855 she was the pestilent troubler of the press. George III. mitigated in one respect, but intensified in another, her pernicious initiative. The Queen Anne Stamp was put not only on every paper "containing news intended to be made public," but on essays not political, as any one may see who looks at Sir Richard Steele's *Spectator* in the Library of the British Museum. Sir Richard's harmless paper was killed by the red ban of Queen Anne. The 60th George III. extended the stamp to "pamphlets containing remarks on any matter in Church or State published at intervals not exceeding twenty-six days, and sold at less than 6d." George III. further ordained that publishers of a newspaper must, under penalty of £20, enter into a bond of £400 or £300, together with sureties, in case the paper contained a blasphemous or seditious libel—every editor being assumed to be a criminally disposed person and naturally inclined to blasphemy and sedition. Every person possessing a printing-press or types for printing, and every type-founder was ordered to give notice to the Clerk

of the Peace. Every person selling type was ordered to give an account of all persons to whom they were sold. Every person who printed anything also had to keep a copy of the matter printed, and write on it the name and abode of the person who employed him to print it. The printer was treated as an enemy of the State, and compelled to become an informer.

The most popular part of the contest against the taxes centred in the repeal of the newspaper stamp. Until the time of the Reform Bill of 1832, there was little objection to the stamp by Englishmen in general ; they rather thought it an inevitable arrangement. The *Atlas*, edited by Mr. H. J. Slack, which had the suggestive intrepidity of Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, said "the Englishman was a stamped animal : he was tattooed all over. There was not a single spot of his body corporate that was not stamped several times. He could not move without knocking his head against a stamp, and before he could arrive at any station of respectability he must have paid more money for stamps than would have set him up for life. The stamp penetrates everywhere ; it seizes upon all things, and fixes its claws wherever there is a tangible substance. Sometimes, indeed, it flies to the intangible, and quarters itself upon the air, the imagination of man, his avocations, his insanity, his hopes and prospects, his pleasures and his pains, and does not scruple to fasten upon his affections. Even love is stamped. A man cannot fall in love and marry a lady without an acknowledgment of the omnipotence of the stamp. An Englishman is born to be stamped : he lives in a state of stamp, and is stamped while he is dying, and after he is dead."

When Lord John Russell introduced the Parliamentary Reform Bill in 1831, the stamp on English newspapers was fourpence. The ordinary price of a newspaper was sevenpence. The interest excited by the Reform Bill created a great demand for newspapers among thousands to whom sevenpence was a prohibitive price. This demand was supplied by publishing newspapers without a stamp in defiance of the law. Some persons did this to make a living by supplying a want. Others were actuated by indignation at the restriction of political knowledge. These ran great risks and suffered serious penalties. Among them no one was more distinguished than Henry Hetherington, who published several unstamped news-

papers with news in every column. But the paper on which he set his heart was the *Poor Man's Guardian*, price one penny. This was exactly the kind of paper the suppression of which was intended by the 10th of Anne and the 60th of George III. The *Guardian's* method of obtaining redress of grievance was to call for Universal Suffrage. It advocated passive resistance to oppressive laws, and was against violence. But it constantly discussed "every matter in Church and State." It gave no bond to the Stamp Office against "blasphemy and sedition," and it paid no stamp duty. More than five hundred persons were prosecuted for selling it, and Mr. Hetherington suffered two imprisonments, of six months each for publishing it. He was hunted by the police for years, having to conceal himself, and enter his place of business in successive disguises. His shop goods were carried off, and blacksmiths were brought in to destroy his presses and type.

After three years' persecution, on 17th June, 1834, the *Poor Man's Guardian* was brought before the Court of Exchequer. Henry Hetherington was at the same time sued for publishing the *People's Conservative*, a paper at a higher price, which contained a considerable amount of miscellaneous news. Mr. Hetherington defended himself in person in a speech interesting, argumentative and resolute. He said the "odious 60th George III. was the work of the notorious Lord Castlereagh, who afterwards cut his throat at North Cray, Kent." Under the Castlereagh Act, he said, it was unlawful to print the Bible in numbers with any comment thereon. The Solicitor-General contended that the *Guardian* and *Conservative* were clearly newspapers, as the jury would, on inspecting them, see. He said little, as convictions followed with mechanical celerity. Lord Lyndhurst said less, but to more purport—namely, that "the *Poor Man's Guardian* was a much more meagre publication than the *Conservative*, but the jury could inspect them, and they knew as much about a newspaper as he did."

They did, and their verdict was against the *Conservative*, with two penalties, £100 for not delivering the affidavit, and £20 for selling them unstamped, while their verdict upon the *Poor Man's Guardian* was in favour of Mr. Hetherington, who at once exclaimed—"I am glad of that, for it legalizes the publication." Lord Lyndhurst then said—"Mr. Hetherington

is anxious that it should be understood that the jury do not think the *Poor Man's Guardian* comes within the Act." [See report of trial in the acquitted *Guardian* of June 21st, 1834.] Thus Lord Lyndhurst volunteered to explain to the jury the purport of Mr. Hetherington's jubilant exclamation. What could be the intention of the Tory Radical Chief Baron in practically legalising the *Guardian*, for publishing which five hundred persons had been imprisoned, it is difficult to conjecture. He must have intended to terminate the disreputable prosecutions continued by the Government, for he knew that the "meagreness" of the publication was its offence. The 60th George III. was designed by Castlereagh to restrain papers "published in great numbers, and at *very small prices*." "Meagreness" was an aggravation rather than an alleviation of the crime. Lord Lyndhurst knew that the 60th of George III. left standing the Act 10th Queen Anne, which Act declared that "every printed paper containing news to be dispersed and made public must bear a stamp." He treated this act as though it was "as dead as Queen Anne" herself. All the while it had an infamous existence on the Statute Book. He, however, in suggesting to the jury that a "meagre" publication was exempted shows that a judge can, when he pleases, annul an Act and virtually create a new law.

The Inland Revenue Board must have been mad, after obtaining five hundred convictions under the Act, to be baffled and condemned, and, as Mr. Collet wrote, the Board "indignantly left the Government and the Constitution of these realms as well as our holy religion to take care of themselves evermore" as far as "meagre" papers could trouble them. They had still the power of action, for they had the 10th of Queen Anne to go upon, and afterwards they did put it in force on outside instigation. Of course it was the duty of the Revenue Board to protect those publishers who did pay the duty against the rivalry of those who did not. But when public sentiment was against the tax, it became odious to enforce it.

Mr. Alderman Abel Heywood of Manchester, who was one of the imprisoned, recently stated at a City meeting, when the honorary Freedom was conferred upon him, that all told in town and country the number imprisoned was 750.

## CHAPTER LII.

### *THE TWELVE YEARS AGITATION AGAINST THE 10TH OF QUEEN ANNE.*

(1854-5.)

IN 1836 the stamp duty was reduced to a penny. This put an end to the competition of the unstamped newspaper, but it did not put an end to unstamped publications. Papers not "meagre" began to appear as rivals to the stamped press. Among the most eminent violators of the 10th of Anne were afterwards the *Athenæum*, the *Builder*, and the *Penny Magazine*. The most defiant violators of the 60th George III. were subsequently the *Reasoner* and the *National Reformer*.

Our free press has two histories. The right of the free publication of opinion goes back to the days of Milton's splendid advocacy of "Unlicensed Printing," and Jeremy Taylor's "Liberty of Prophesying," and comes down to the days of Richard Carlile, Watson, Hetherington, and others. We are not concerned here with the penalties of opinion, but with the taxes which impeded its expression, though a history of the twelve years' agitation against these taxes would be an interesting political story of modern times.

By the Reform Bill of 1832, the government of the country was consigned to what W. J. Fox called the "Worshipful Company of Ten Pound Householders," who sent representatives to Parliament who had the merit of thinking it was time that the dead hand of Queen Anne should be taken off the press. On March 7, 1849, an association was formed "to obtain the exemption of the press from all taxation and from all control except that of a court of law." Francis Place was treasurer; James

Watson, sub-treasurer. Richard Moore, who was afterwards chairman, C. D. Collet, secretary, and others, were members of the committee, which in 1850 was increased by James Stansfeld, George Dawson, and myself. In 1851, Mr. Milner Gibson, M.P., became president, and J. Alfred Novello sub-treasurer. The committee was increased by the names of Dr. Black, John Bright, M.P., R. Cobden, M.P., Passmore Edwards, Herbert Spencer, Joseph Hume, M.P., John Cassell, Thornton Hunt, Professor T. H. Key, Rev. E. R. Larken, George Henry Lewes, William Scholefield, M.P., and others.

These persons had no interest to serve, and only resentment to encounter, in the part they took. It was generous and disinterested indignation at the injustice and insolence of law that brought them into the field. The first Lord Shaftesbury wrote—"I know nothing greater or nobler than the undertaking and managing some important accusation by which some high criminal of State, or some formed body of conspirators against the public, may be arraigned and brought to punishment, through the honest zeal and *public affection* of a private man." "Public affection"—a happy phrase, well describes the sentiment that animated the committee.

The Taxes on Knowledge in 1848 consisted of duties of the following kind, producing in round numbers—

On foreign books .....	£ 7,647
On advertisements .....	153,017
On paper .....	745,795
The penny stamp .....	360,273

At that time (1848) sixty millions of newspapers were transmitted by post. The cost of this transmission and the manufacture of stamps, taken at £150,000, would leave a net revenue from taxes on knowledge of upwards of one million.

It was entirely an uphill enterprize to undertake the abolition of these long established, fiercely defended, profitable imposts on ideas. Time and artifice had disguised them from the people most affected by them. Canning accused the people of "an ignorant impatience of taxation." He might more reasonably have accused them of ignorant acquiescence in it. Editors of newspapers, fearing competition, were mostly against the repeal of the stamp. Paper makers were against the

repeal of the duty on paper, which, being paid in advance, kept small funded competitors out of the field. Even the advertisement duty had its defenders, as it kept rival tradesmen from appealing to the general public. Yet, within twelve years of incessant and intelligent agitation, all these taxes were swept away by a committee which never had an average income of £300 a year.

Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden were the great supporters of the question in Parliament. The leader of the repeal there was Mr. Milner Gibson. Never had a leader more celebrated supporters. Never had supporters a more intrepid and ingenious leader. Mr. Gibson was a young Tory squire when he became member for Ipswich, which seat he lost through becoming convinced of the common sense of Free Trade. He was elected member for Manchester, and his fine abilities enriched Liberalism. He was tall, handsome, with a pleasant, winning expression, and a singular softness and persuasiveness of speech. There was, as the *Daily News* said, "a sparkle in his brisk talk and light comedy manner," and adversaries were oblivious of the rapier in his argument until they felt the point. The contrast of a country gentleman of debonnaire manners being the cordial colleague of manufacturers and Puritan politicians, was a theme of comment. Mr. Gibson was a dexterous debater, master of the methods of Parliament, and excelled in drawing up a resolution which the largest number of those objecting to it would be compelled to vote for.

Next to Mr. Milner Gibson, the success of the movement with means so limited, was owing to Mr. Collet Dobson Collet, whose energy, resource and devices were like Cleopatra's charms, of infinite variety. At every meeting of the committee he had twenty schemes of action to lay before them, from which Bright and Cobden and Gibson would select the most practical, and the most mischievous to the enemy.<sup>1</sup> A good secretary, who has enterprize together with deference to the opinion of those respon-

<sup>1</sup> "It would be unjust of him not to mention the services of their secretary, Mr. Collet. His friend Mr. Cobden had said to him a short time since, 'I wonder what Collet will turn his hand to next?' He hoped he would undertake something, for it would be a pity if such wonderful tact, good-nature, zeal and intelligence were not always employed in the service of his country."—*John Bright, M.P., Speech at Exeter Hall, at meeting for Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, February, 1855.*

sible, is master of the movement in which he is engaged. He at once serves and instructs without offending the self-respect, or alienating the members by action without their knowledge and consent. The courageous policy of the committee (founded on that of Henry Hetherington) was to destroy obnoxious laws by compelling the Government to enforce them impartially. Odious enactments are maintained by permitting powerful offenders to escape and applying them to poorer offenders, who have no means of resistance or retaliation.

By the same policy the Sunday Society might have repealed in less than twelve years the infamous act of Bishop Porteous, against which they have been for more than thirty years vainly supplicating.

In the chapter on the "Personal Characteristics of Mr. Bright," mention is made of Mr. Peter Borthwick's meeting at the City of London Tavern, called to form a separate society for repealing the paper duty. As a Tory, Mr. Borthwick was against the diffusion of political information amongst the "masses"—a civil substitute (about that time invented) for the term "mob." The policy of the *Morning Post* was to put the question of the paper duty into other hands, which would have diverted public attention and destroyed the unity of the demand for the complete emancipation of the press. When the amendment was carried which I proposed, the Borthwick scheme was heard of no more. The terms in which *The Times* mentioned my speech were of advantage to me. The next day Francis Place spoke of it to me, saying, in the generous way he had of encouraging young men, that I might become a useful advocate. This I remember, as it was the first time I had received approval from him, for, though he freely gave counsel, he seldom gave praise.

As *Punch*, the *Athenæum*, the *Builder*, and *Dickens's Household Narrative of Current Events* all contained news weekly, and were not required to be stamped, the attention of Mr. Timm, of the Inland Revenue, was called to these cases. When he intimidated small country publishers by threatening them with prosecution, he was asked why he assailed publishers whom prosecution would ruin, and left unmolested rich offenders who could well defend themselves. Mr. Timm's answers were never satisfactory. Thereupon further letters

would be sent, pointing out the deficiency of his answers, and a member of Parliament, often Mr. Gibson, would ask for explanation in the House. This worried the Inland Revenue Board, and Mr. Timm would seek repose by not replying to letters. Then questions were again put in Parliament asking why he was silent when the public interest required information from him, which made Mr. Timm's life not worth living. Mr. John Wood, the chairman of the Inland Board of Revenue, said this paltry stamp tax, which only brought in about £500,000 a year, gave them more trouble than all the rest of the revenue put together, including the income-tax. The committee exerted themselves to increase that trouble, and John Stuart Mill afterwards said that "the committee converted the department," which can only be done by compelling the administrators to apply their Acts to rich as well as to poor.

Charles Dickens published the *Household Narrative of Current Events* without a stamp, unaware that the 10th of Queen Anne was not, like its mistress, dead, but only sleeping. The committee promoted a prosecution, which soon suspended that publication—at a loss to him, it was said, of £4,000 a year. Two of the three judges, before whom the case came, decided against Queen Anne, and in favour of Mr. Dickens. Baron Parke dissented. The Attorney-General (afterwards Lord Chief Justice Cockburn) agreed with Baron Parke that the decision was against the law; but it helped the agitation greatly.

The Inland Revenue Board had sleepless nights through our demand that they should define what was "news." It was not in them to do it. They could give no unassailable answer. Disraeli came to their assistance, as the reader will see further on, but failed to give them relief. When the Dickens trial came on, the cry in the newspaper offices was—"What the Dickens *is* news?"

## CHAPTER LIII.

### *THE "HOLY WAR" OF THE UNSTAMPED PRESS.*

(1854.)

EVERY reader of Bunyan knows how the town of Mansoul was taken in the "Holy War." The taking of Somerset House by the forces of the No-Stamp Agitators was, if less memorable, not less "Holy," for it was the war against political and religious ignorance.

The first Parliamentary triumph against these taxes was on April 14, 1853, when Mr. Milner Gibson carried a resolution for the total repeal of the advertisement duty, in which he was supported by the vote of Mr. Disraeli. Four days later Mr. Gladstone brought in his Budget, which proposed to reduce the duty from 1s. 6d. to 6d. The resolution that Mr. Gibson carried pledged the House against the tax, but did not repeal it. When Mr. Gladstone brought in the Bill to fix the duty at 6d., Mr. Gibson moved its total repeal, but he was beaten by 116 votes in favour of the 6d., only 106 voting against it. The Government, having performed their duty, went to the clubs or the opera, and left the House to its divisions on the details in committee. It was moved that there be a duty of 6d., when Mr. E. J. Craufurd, M.P. for the Ayr Burghs, who was always at hand in late divisions, moved an amendment that in the Bill the figure 6 should be omitted and 0 substituted. The House divided, when it proved that there were 77 votes in favour of 0, and only 68 in favour of 6 : majority for 0—9. So the House determined that there should be an advertisement duty of no pounds, no shillings, no pence, no farthings. "Is this correct?" asked Mr. Gibson. "Perfectly," answered the

Speaker, who was then Mr. Shaw Lefevre, afterwards Lord Eversley. Mr. Craufurd, appearing at his club the next day, was saluted with the exclamation :—" See the conquering Zero comes ! " The next morning when Mr. Gladstone awoke, he found his sixpence irrevocably gone. Ministers were surprised, and Lord John Russell was said to be very wroth.

Mr. Craufurd had greater intellectual independence than any Scotch member of my time. His father was Mr. Craufurd of Auchinames and Crosby Castle, formerly Treasurer-General of the Ionian Islands. His mother was Sophia Mariana, a daughter of Major-General Horace Churchill, and great granddaughter of Sir Robert Walpole. One of her daughters married Aurelio Saffi, the second Triumvir of Rome with Mazzini.

In 1833 the duty on advertisements was 3s. 6d. in Great Britain, and 2s. 6d. in Ireland ; it was reduced to 1s. 6d. in Great Britain and 1s. in Ireland. When, in 1853, the duty was totally repealed, it yielded £180,000.

The policy of the committee of which I write was to encourage publishers who issued papers liable to the stamp duty to continue doing it, and inviting them, in case they were interfered with, to communicate with the committee, who would do what they could to defend them. *The Potteries Free Press and Working Man's Chronicle* was one of these papers. It was published by George Turner, a spirited newsagent of Stoke-upon-Trent, who announced that the paper was " under the protection of the Society for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge." In some cases Mr. Collet gave his name as publisher, so that he might be answerable for the consequences.

To incite Somerset House to action when it showed a politic somnolency, it was decided, at the time of opening Parliament, to get some newspaper of repute to publish a single copy of its issue containing the Queen's Speech, without the newspaper stamp, and call upon the Government to prosecute it. But who would run the risk ? I was asked to ascertain that. All in vain I tried the most likely offices. Then I asked the paper whose intrepidity I knew—the *Leader*. The proprietor was willing, but, being a man of fortune, he prudently consulted his solicitor, who advised him that the resources of mischief concealed in the odious Stamp Act were such that he should ask for a £2,000 bond. They said it ought to be £10,000.

There was no means of giving the bond required, and it fell to me to publish special news without the stamp. If any paper had complied with the request, we intended calling upon Mr. Timm at once to prosecute it. It was therefore fair that proprietors should ask for some indemnity. I believe I inquired whether the committee could promise any assistance in case of my becoming involved in liabilities beyond my means. But I soon saw no guarantee could be given, as the Government, if they had chosen, could condemn me in fines which would have absorbed Mr. Milner Gibson's whole fortune. Mr. Collet was of opinion the Government would not go to such an extreme, but said, for reasons included in the Lord's Prayer, it was well not to "lead them into temptation."

After the Dickens decision of the Court of Exchequer, which declared monthly publications not liable to the stamp duty, I received letters from Mr. C. D. Collet, saying:—"I hope to complete my arrangements for publishing my monthly *War Chronicle* next Wednesday. Will you publish it for me?—paying me at the rate of £3 12s. 2d. per thousand; no credit. An answer will oblige." Mr. Richard Moore and Mr. James Hoppey wrote me letters making the same inquiry. In each case I assented. The news in these *Chronicles* was mainly made up from the columns of the *Empire*, a paper owned by Mr. Thomas Livesey and edited by John Hamilton (afterwards editor of the *Morning Star*). Thus *Moore's War Chronicle*, *Collet's War Chronicle*, and *Hoppey's War Chronicle* appeared. All the *Chronicle* purported to be "published by authority" of the Dickens decision in the Court of Exchequer. We had trouble through the fears of newsvendors; therefore I sent notices to the "trade" saying that a "*Legal War Chronicle*" would be published monthly, as several enterprising persons had announced their intention to start monthly war papers. In order to secure the public the advantage of continuous news of the war, Messrs. Holyoake and Co. had made arrangements to supply all newsagents with one of these papers every week. If difficulty was experienced by booksellers in the country in obtaining the papers, they should write to Messrs. Holyoake and Co., who would supply them from their office." These papers being issued on successive Saturdays in the month, the series gave the public an unstamped newspaper every week,

It struck the Revenue Board as curious that four separate proprietors of monthly papers should choose me for their publisher, and, as they were entirely wanting in confidence in my simplicity, they took action. Writs were issued to alarm us, but the Attorney-General neglected or refused to file information against the proprietor and publisher. The Board of Inland Revenue were excited, and wrote letters to all whom they had served with writs, threatening to anticipate the judgment of the Court of Exchequer and the verdict of a jury by a summary process. This was an unconstitutional and unprecedented procedure. To counteract this threat I assured the vendors, in a further circular, "that it was not likely proceedings would be taken against them, until conviction had been obtained against me; and instructed any one who should be summoned to apply to me or Mr. Collet." As writs were served upon us, and no information filed, it was clear that there was trouble at the Inland Revenue Board. I therefore issued in two colours a large placard as follows :—

SHAM WAR  
Against the Unstamped Press.  
Holyoake and Co.  
Announce that, though  
Diplomatic Relations  
Between Fleet Street and Downing Street have been  
Suspended,  
Yet they have good reason to believe that the Stamp  
Office is commanded by  
Admiral Keogh,  
Whose force is destitute of gunboats, and that there is  
NO REAL BLOCKADE  
In the City of London. Nothing can therefore prevent  
the public from being supplied with the  
"WAR CHRONICLE,"  
Except the  
Connivance or Credulity of  
THE TRADE.  
The "*War Chronicle*," Price 1d., is published every  
Wednesday morning by  
Holyoake and Co.,  
147, Fleet Street, London.  
Signed—Holyoake and Co., Printers.

While the unstamped papers, described in the previous chapter, were being issued, I was under daily liability of arrest. The Crown had the power to arrest every person in my house, seize all the books, and destroy all the printing presses, as they

had done to Mr. Hetherington. I kept a poncho under the counter with some refreshments in, and was in attendance during six weeks, to serve the unstamped papers, as I would never allow any one else to incur the responsibility which I had myself invoked. My brother Austin was not less ready than myself, but I asked him to wait his turn. The poncho, I gave to "Count de" Rudio.

At this time Mr. Edward Lloyd, the founder of *Lloyd's News*, was publishing a penny picture paper, in which he gave an account of the escape of a lion, which, though useful information to the public, was declared to be news. Whereupon Mr. Lloyd found it was less dangerous to fall in the way of the lion than into the jaw of the Stamp laws. He was at once told he must stop or stamp. He stamped, raised his paper to twopence, and lost his circulation. I neither stopped nor stamped. It was computed in one of the publications of the committee for repealing these taxes that I sold some 30,000 copies, which, as the fine upon each was £20, represented fines of £600,000. Besides these, I published twenty-four numbers of the *Fleet Street Advertiser*, which had not a large sale, but every number was liable to the same fine. The best subscriber to it was the Inland Revenue Board themselves, whose agent came regularly every Saturday morning and purchased the first half-dozen copies, so that I was in for £120 of fine before breakfast. In nineteen weeks my liability from official custom alone amounted to £2,280. Finally, I was summoned to the Court of Exchequer to answer to my liability, which obliged me to say that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would oblige me by taking the amount weekly, as I had not the money by me. Mr. Gladstone was then the Chancellor, and in my absence from town my brother Austin was one of a deputation to him. Mr. Gladstone said, in his gracious way, "He knew my object was not to break the law, but to try the law." Fortunately for me, the Repeal of the Stamp Duty took place shortly after. Though my solicitors, Messrs. Ashurst and Son, put in an appearance on my behalf, the case was never proceeded with, and I have never applied to have it opened.

All the while I was publishing every week forbidden news in the *Reasoner*. The attention of the Board of Inland Revenue was called to the fact that they were neglecting their

duty by not indicting me, as the *Reasoner* had always published news without a stamp. Eventually they resolved to do it. Their reluctance arose from not wishing to give State publicity to a journal which was not so orthodox as could be desired. As I was a Freeman of the City of London, and my house was within the precincts of the City, it was necessary to take me before the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House. Then they found that the City authorities were opposed to having a press prosecution in the City. The reputation of those they had had in the days of Hone and Carlile was such that they coveted no more of it. So the Government left alone the *Reasoner*, the oldest defiant paper in London at that time.

This defiance of issue of *War Chronicles* was done not only in spite of interest and ignorance, but in spite of newsvendors. Though they were selling two hundred illegal papers, they were insensible to their own danger. They held a meeting in St. Martin's Hall a few nights before the Repeal, and sent a deputation to Mr. Gladstone with instructions to dissuade him from going on with his bill. On the other hand, we sent him word urging him to proceed with it. Being a newsvendor myself, I attended the St. Martin's Hall meeting, and moved an amendment in favour of their supporting the Repeal in their own interest.

The newsvendors were present in considerable numbers at some of the public meetings. Their fear was that the introduction of penny papers would deprive them of their profits. Mr. Cobden on one occasion said to them, "He had no doubt that could he meet them a few years hence they would acknowledge that their extreme susceptibility to the interests of their pockets had exceedingly blinded their mental vision." <sup>1</sup> This they have long since admitted.

<sup>1</sup> R. Cobden, M.P., Speech at Exeter Hall, February, 1855.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### *END OF THE FREE PRESS TERROR.*

(1855.)

THE Midland Railway, by putting third class carriages in all its trains, was the first to bring the workman to his destination at the same time as the gentleman. It was foreseen that the repeal of the newspaper stamp would do more for the workman, for it would bring all the news of the world to his door before his employer was out of bed. Instead of having to wait a week for his master's second-hand newspaper, he would have one of his own. This was worth working for.

The Inland Revenue Board was drawn into an ethical difficulty. I sent a memorial asking that the *Reasoner*, of which I was proprietor, might be put upon the same footing as several other publications, religious and literary, which by the use of the stamp were permitted to pass through the post office free. The privilege was worth the penny, and I was willing to pay that sum for it. This cost "my Lords" of the Treasury, the Revenue Office, and the Postmaster, some tribulation. Messrs. Ashurst, Waller, and Morris revised my memorial, and conducted a disquieting correspondence with the Board. Mr. Ashurst had been, as I have said, the adviser of Sir Rowland Hill in the affair of the penny postage, and was master of the art of giving discomfort to the official mind, in the most constitutional way.

When they asked for a reply from the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote to acquaint my solicitors that "an official communication will be addressed to Mr. Holyoake from the Lords of the Treasury in reply to his

memorial." At length Mr. J. P. Godby informed me that "the Postmaster-General had been pleased to authorize the *Reasoner* to circulate under the usual newspaper privileges, provided each copy is duly stamped in accordance with the regulation of the office." Mr. Ashurst replied that "Mr. Holyoake, upon application at the Stamp Office, was told that the *Reasoner* could not be stamped, unless he made a declaration that the *Reasoner* is a newspaper, which it is not; and that Mr. Holyoake declined to make any such declaration, as it would be false, and was advised that it would be a misdemeanour to do so." The opinion of Mr. Hoggins, Q.C., and Mr. Phinn, Q.C., which Mr. Ashurst had taken, decided that "it was a misdemeanour besides an act of immorality to declare the thing which was not. The essence of the definition of perjury is that it is a false statement made in some judicial proceeding, but a false declaration that a paper is a newspaper which is not a newspaper is a statutable misdemeanour."

I sent to "my Lords" a list of seventeen publications with the names and addresses of the publishers, all of which obtained post-office privileges by means of a "false declaration." Three of these were the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, *The Clerical Journal*, and the *Protestant Magazine*. Clearly these journals were no more newspapers than the *Reasoner*, yet they made a declaration that they were. Mr. Godby was reduced to the necessity of advising me to make a "false declaration" as the only means of obtaining post-office privileges. Thus we worried the departments, and showed that they connived at public falsehood and gave a premium of privilege to it.

In 1855 the newspaper stamp was abolished. On June 13, 1861, the paper duty followed. The agitation for this repeal was fruitful in devices and in curious incidents, though free from the dangerous penalties of the earlier agitation. In the *Gazette* of the society, Mr. Collet had to write (May, 1861) an article "On the Tax which Nobody Pays." It was proved logically and conclusively, by officials and politicians, that the duty was a tax which came out of nobody's pocket—and how the Chancellor of the Exchequer collected it was the only thing left unexplained.

We owed the repeal of the paper duty to Mr. Gladstone. The opposition in Parliament held the loss to the revenue to

be £1,252,000. No other Chancellor of the Exchequer would have taken the risk of this loss with the income tax at tenpence in the pound. The Bill Mr. Gladstone drew was far more comprehensive as to the removal of incidental restrictions than the one passed under Sir George Cornewall Lewis's manipulation. The philosophical baronet was far excelled by Mr. Gladstone. Where a thing was right Mr. Gladstone went all the way of it. 4½%

If the reader should look into the *People's Review* edited by me, and into volumes of the *Reasoner* from 1849 to 1862, he will find more authentic documents and a fuller record of facts concerning this agitation than elsewhere, save in the *Gazette* of the association for the repeal of these taxes, and in official records in Mr. Collet's possession. The readers of the *Reasoner* made repeated subscription in aid of the agitation. For the testimonial to Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. John Francis, the secretary, said I collected in town and country £200. I knew everybody who would give anything for agitations of progress, and, as I went about the country speaking, I could, without expense to the committee, promote their objects.

Mr. John Francis, publisher of the *Athenæum*, whose remarkable life has been published by his son, was distinguished in a high degree by public spirit, practical judgment, and untiring persistence. He contributed greatly to the abolition of the paper duty by establishing a "Newspaper and Periodical Press Association" in support of it. Mr. Milner Gibson and his Parliamentary and public colleagues continued the fight until the repeal of that obstructive impost was won. In 1861, a testimonial of several hundred pounds was presented to Mr. Gibson by a committee of whom Robert Chambers was treasurer.

A secretary of sagacity, energy, and resource is the maker of a movement, and Mr. Collet, who had been the secretary of the "Association for Repealing the Taxes on Knowledge" from the beginning to the end (and for seven years of the time his services were honorary) had well earned a testimonial. Afterwards (1862) one was presented to him with grateful unanimity. Among the promoters were the names of W. H. Ashurst, A. S. Ayrton, M.P., E. H. J. Craufurd, M.P., W. E. Hickson, Dr. J. A. Langford, M. E. Marsden, S. Morley, J. Stansfeld, M.P., P.

A. Taylor, M.P., Washington Wilks, and Professor F. W. Newman. Each name had honour in it.

In 1859, Mr. Milner Gibson having accepted the office of President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Ayrton took charge of the Repeal of the Paper Duty. To Mr. Acton Smee Ayrton also belongs the credit of carrying (Feb. 7, 1861) the abolition of the Security System. He had before carried the Bill three times through the House of Commons, only to be rejected by the Lords.

Success was owing to others also, who on the platform gave their great influence to the society. A greater array of eminent men took part in this work than in any other agitation of that time. No cause, not even those of the Anti-Corn Law League, provided for the public of London a more interesting platform of speakers than the Anti-Knowledge Tax Society. On the night of its third public meeting (December 1, 1852), Douglas Jerrold was in the chair at Exeter Hall. Cobden, Milner Gibson, Charles Knight, the Rev. Thomas Spencer, M.A. (the uncle of Herbert Spencer), George Henry Lewes (who was one of the speakers), Samuel Wilderspin, and others were present. George Cruikshank was one whom, when Jerrold saw him enter the committee room, exclaimed—"Now, George, remember that water is very very good anywhere except upon the brain." Cruikshank had become a vehement teetotaler, which Jerrold was not.

Bright spoke on other occasions, as did Cobden. Other speakers were George Dawson, with his easy, luminous, satiric audacity; and Dr. John Watts, with his measured metallic voice, clear statement, and confident mastery of facts. Dr. Watts, in earlier years a fellow social missionary with me in the Robert Owen movement, was always the advocate of free knowledge.

On other occasions we had as speakers G. A. Sala, George Thompson, John Cassell, Professor Key, Charles Knight, Edward Miall, Serjeant Parry, and W. J. Fox. One night Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, who twice visited me at Fleet Street, displayed a newspaper "of vast dimensions when unfolded," to an Exeter Hall audience who had never seen anything like it. "That is what we have for a few cents in America," exclaimed Greeley, "where we have no taxes on knowledge."

At a soiree given to Mr. Milner Gibson at the Whittington Club in 1854, at which Sir John Shelley presided, Samuel Lucas, of the *Morning Star* (who married a sister of Mr. Bright), and Mr. Cobden spoke. Mr. Gibson proposed "The memory of Francis Place, Henry Hetherington and the agitators of 1836."

It was Leigh Hunt, in the early days of the *Examiner*, who first used the phrase, "Taxes upon knowledge"—a phrase which passed to every tongue. Lord Lytton, then Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer, was the next conspicuous person who used it, and some erroneously thought he originated it. Though that was not so, he acquired patent rights in it. On the famous night when the stamp fell, I was in the House of Commons when the 10th of Queen Anne was put to death. It was on the 26th of March, 1855, and I was present from four o'clock in the afternoon until nearly one o'clock next morning.

Mr. Bouverie had vacated the chair, the usher raised the mace, the Speaker took his seat, and announced with a voice reverberant as the Long Parliament—loud enough to reach into innumerable sessions to come—that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's (Sir George Cornwall Lewis) Bill would be proceeded with.

While Mr. Deedes moved an amendment (in a dull, insipid, gaseous speech, of the carbonic acid kind) to defer the second reading of the Bill, a fashionably-dressed, slenderly-built member appeared on the right of the gangway taking notes. From the Speaker's Gallery he seemed a young man. Before the dull Deedes had regained his seat, the elegantly-looking loungee from the club threw down his hat and caught the Speaker's eye. Rebuking his "honourable friend" (Deedes) for assuming that the House had not had time to understand the bill before it, he announced that twenty years ago he (the loungee) had introduced a similar Bill into Parliament. Strangers then knew that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was the member addressing the House. It was said that Sir Edward purchased his baronetcy by compromising the Newspaper Stamp Bill of 1836. Be this as it may, he nobly vindicated his liberal and literary fame by his brilliant speech this night. "Do not fancy," he exclaimed, "that this penny tax is a slight imposition. Do not fancy that a penny paper is necessarily low and bad. Once

there existed a penny daily paper—it was called the *Spectator*. Addison and Steele were its contributors. It did more to refine the manners of the people than half the books in the British Museum. Suddenly a penny tax was put on that penny paper, and so one fatal morning, the most pleasing and graceful instructor that ever brought philosophy to the fireside, had vanished from the homes of men. A penny tax sufficed to extinguish the *Spectator* and divorce that exquisite alliance which genius had established between mirth and virtue."

This fine passage was worthy of the occasion. Nothing comparable to it was said during the debate. What might have been the condition of society had the interval of more than a century, between Sir Richard Steele and Charles Knight, been illumined by the activity of a free press, instead of the weary period between the *Spectator* and *Penny Magazine* being one of the parliamentary depression of literature !

Mr. Miall rose several times without catching Mr. Speaker's eye. At length the House observing him, courteously called, "Miall, Miall." The honourable member for Rochdale, who had then begun to wear a beard, and looked all the sturdier a Nonconformist for doing so, then addressed the House ; and his speech was as forcible, as compact, as sharply-chiselled, as anything spoken that night, not excepting Mr. Gladstone's felicitous speech on the Sardinian loan five hours before.

Sir George Cornewall Lewis spoke more fluently than report gave him credit for ; more fluently than Palmerston, who was guttural, halting, and inelegant. Disraeli's voice, commonly silvery, was, on this night, thick and explosive. His definition of "news" was ludicrous. "N E W S," he said, was derived from the four points of the compass—North, East, West, and South. A fact from one point was not news ; a fact from all four was. Whether *one* fact could come from all four points at once, he did not inform the House.

Those who say old convictions are never shaken, nor votes won by debate, should have stood in the lobby at midnight after this division. A burly country squire of the Church-and-King species—fat and circular as a prize pig—a Tory "farmers' friend," born with the belief that a free press would lead to an American Presidency in St. Stephen's, and that the penny stamp was the only barrier in the way of a French Convention

in this country, and that Gibson, Cobden, and Bright, were counterparts of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat in disguise—this obese legislator, nudging a Liberal who had voted in the majority, said, "I gave a vote on your side to-night! Lytton convinced me." A triumph of oratory that for Sir Edward! 215 voted for a free press on this night—161 against; majority 54. Lord Palmerston, be it said, threw in some determined and valuable words before the vote.

The next week we placed a new motto on our *War Fly-sheet*, as follows:—"Consisting exclusively of intelligence from the Seat of War in the *East*, and published in accordance with the recorded and mature judgment of the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli, formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer, that intelligence from only one point of the compass is not News." According to this dictum, an American, an African, or Continental journal was not a newspaper, when its news was indigenous. The *New York Tribune* was not a newspaper when its information was American. The *Journal des Debats* was not a newspaper if its matter was exclusively French. Oh, ingenious Benjamin Disraeli! Of the two men of literary renown in the House, Bulwer spoke up for freedom of knowledge—Disraeli voted against it.

Every member of Parliament had been supplied by advertisers with a paper marked "For immediate perusal." It consisted of various extracts from the *Reasoner*, supposed to be specially calculated to awaken the terrors of the House at the prospect of an unstamped press. A passage was quoted which recorded Mr. Cowen's permission to incorporate the *Northern Tribune* in the *Reasoner*. That was thought to forbode the immediate dissolution of the Empire. A parody I had written on the Rev. Brewin Grant's style of controversy was given as also a ground of alarm. Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton took up the circular, and commenting upon it, said it had increased his disgust at the opponents of the measure. He called it "trumpery—an eclecticism of twaddled bugbear." It happened that these "twaddlers in bugbear" had used an unrevised list of Members of Parliament and sent copies to twelve dead members. The Postmaster, finding the circulars bore no writer's name and no printer's name, but guided by the subject, supposed them to be some advertisement I had issued, ordered

them to be sent to the "Publisher of the *Reasoner* Newspaper." Thus the secret circular was a dead opposition—sent to dead members—returned to the Dead Letter Office—proving a dead failure.

The *English Churchman* said that "the *Reasoner* was at the bottom of this agitation." Every member of the House of Commons and House of Lords was told it; yet in after years, when the blessings of the repeal of the taxes on knowledge were admitted by all classes, I found Christian organs, which declared in 1855 that the *Reasoner* was the cause, claiming the victory themselves, and declaring we had nothing to do with it.

The Government itself gave an instance of this contradictoriness. Their Stamp Bills included the precise measures indicated in the memorials I had sent to the Treasury. The Lords of the Treasury had told me six months before that "they had no power to grant my request of posting the *Reasoner* with an ordinary postage stamp. "They had no power—the law did not authorise them to grant my request." This was the stereotyped official answer which had strangled a hundred agitations. No movement ever went beyond this point before. We sent the reply of their lordships to eminent counsel, who answered that the lords *had* the power. In another memorial we respectfully submitted these opinions to the Treasury. "My Lords" then replied (but not admitting their power) saying "they had caused a Bill to be prepared for giving them the power." Yet on the night of the debate Sir George Cornewall Lewis assured the House of Commons that no Bill on the matter of postage was necessary, for his colleagues *had* the power to make a Treasury warrant whereby unstamped publications could be admitted to postal privileges at any rate determined upon. The power which the lords under their own seal told us (see *Reasoner*, No. 457, p. 315) they *could not* exercise, they told the House of Commons a few weeks later they *could*.

Thus the association which undertook to free the press from all taxation did free it. When it concluded its agitation, advertisements were free. The stamp upon political knowledge was abolished. News was no longer criminal. The exciseman was banished from paper manufactories, and editors were no longer a criminal class who had to give heavy bail for their good behaviour.

## CHAPTER LV.

### *DYNAMITE ADVOCACY.*

(1855.)

OUTSPOKENNESS is not sensationalism, though it may cause sensation. Outspokenness is the plain, bold, honest, statement of principle. It is reasoned truth, without dishonouring imputation on any of a different way of thinking. Sensationalism is attracting attention by device or language which causes surprise and excitement — appealing to ignorance, passion, or prejudice, regardless whether it pains or repels permanently, providing it answers profitably for the purpose of attracting readers or hearers.

One evil of sensational advocacy is that it allures for a time chiefly a class of people who care only for the gratification "of giving the adversary as good as he sends." Applauding from the love of excitement, caring nothing for the principle, the sensationalists can never be counted upon ; when trouble comes they desert those whom they have cheered into danger. This is not the worst result of the policy of outrage. The practical adherents of the cause are compromised by excesses, and stand aloof from a cause discredited by extravagance. A town is often set against a movement which seems without self-controlling principle, and the advocacy of the cause is killed there. The class of citizens of most influence cease to countenance sensational exhibitions, and, when the halls are once closed against the wilder sort of advocates, no one able to do it takes any part in getting them reopened, lest the same thing should occur again. I have known many towns in which honest and advanced movements have been extinguished in this way for years.

The public hall in Nottingham could at one time be had for the public discussion with the clergy. Mr. Charles Southwell encountered the Rev. Brewin Grant there, giving him in the way of vituperation "as good as he sent." Those who approved of sceptics being assailed did not approve of the reprisal, and arranged that the authorities should refuse the hall. The debate ended in tumult, and long years elapsed before discussions with ministers occurred there again. Before that time, there were ministers of the quality of the Rev. Alexander Syme, entirely dispassionate and fair, and discussions with them were informing to the public. A calculating advocate of Christianity could succeed in closing the halls in any town by inciting foolish adversaries to debate in his own way, when a pretext was furnished for those who distrusted all discussion to get discussion prohibited.

A hall which had cost a considerable sum to erect could have its value destroyed almost in a night by one wild lecturer. Some Freethought speakers consider themselves authorised to be free lances—whereas a free lance is a free traitor, taking credit for aiding a party which he destroys, and all the while helping the party to which he pretends to be opposed. Liberty merely means the power of doing what is right—whereas the sensationalist takes it to be freedom to do what suits his purpose. Denunciation being much easier than argument, denunciation is mostly cultivated.

A generous-minded confectioner in Plymouth, thinking it discreditable that there should be no place in the town where liberal opinions could be advocated, sold his business and devoted his savings to the erection of a hall which he thought might, by letting, yield sufficient for his moderate needs—he being an abstainer on principle, and distinguished by heroic self-denial. I warned him that unless he used judgment as to the speakers, he would find the commercial value of the property destroyed. Not understanding that secular thought required as much regulation and control as religious advocacy, he made no conditions, and the result was that the place acquired the colour of extreme heresy in a few months, and was entirely unlettable for general purposes, as the townsfolk would not go there. The result was ruin to him.

Sensationalism, besides the disadvantage it has brought upon

a cause, has often proved perilous through the disadvantage it has brought upon the individual. Some will go to extremes in encouraging extremes. Excitement and zeal will lead to sacrifices beyond the means of those who make them. This led me to discourage gifts which, when the day of reaction came, would cause regret. A young German gentleman, Max Kyllman, sent for me one morning to an hotel in Regent Street, and offered me two bank notes for promoting the law of affirmation. Not knowing his resources or connections, I gave him one back, saying that "at a future time, if more money was needed I would let him know." Mr. Le Blond, in 1855, for several weeks gave me £10 every Sunday morning at South Place Chapel, as loans for the Fleet Street House. After the fifth morning I refused to take more. At an early period in secular advocacy, I proposed that gift or sacrifice, for public principles, should be based on tithes, not to exceed one-tenth of the giver's means—as he who gave more was likely one day to discourage others who observed or suffered from the consequences of his enthusiasm.

Persecution sometimes incites sensationalism, which is then held as justifying persecution to put it down. If those assailed contented themselves with simply maintaining what was unfairly prohibited, just as though the prohibition was not, persecution would be equally defeated, right would be equally vindicated, and persecution afforded no pretext for recommending itself. The harm of ostentatious defiance by a minority is that power is irritated and becomes more vindictive and intimidating. Those who show the greatest daring are themselves commonly ruined. If their courage sustains them, and they do not repine themselves, their families spread warnings and dismay by telling the story of the disadvantages brought upon them. Then many who could afford to resist are alarmed, and do nothing. The hero of extreme defiance often goes to the other extreme himself, and, after keeping no terms with the Church, ends in taking a pew in it and being as ostentatious in supporting as he was in defying it, without the justification of believing it.

The clergy do not know their own business when they keep what they call "blasphemy laws" on the statute books, since they repress extremes by which they can always profit.

I am neither for time-serving nor for cowardice. I am for courage and good sense—I am for a man doing all he can, and not attempting more than he can carry through. He who errs in extremes by miscalculation is to be respected—he who errs from not calculating at all is disentitled to respect. I confine myself to the detail of effects which I myself have seen.

Many years after my visit to Cheltenham, before described, I had a third time an opportunity of speaking there. Covetous of publicity in the papers for what I had to say, I drew up a placard which might excite curiosity without recalling the memory of the resentful past. I, however, failed entirely to get the ear of the press—by no act of my own. Two friends I much valued, who happened to be visitors there, were desirous of retaliating upon the town for its former treatment of me. Yielding to them, I accepted the placard which they drew up. It contained disturbing lines. I was under no illusion as to the consequences. The public were instantly excited. Some of the residents, in favour of my views, applauded the project of retaliation, and many others who cared more for excitement than conviction made themselves prominent in approval of the proposed attack. In that town my own pride incited me to defiance, and, with command of the press, I should have had satisfaction and success. When the hour of action came, most of the residents who should have stood by me left me to the consequences. The owner of the hall engaged was intimidated by the authorities, and the doors were locked. A large room in an inn was procured with difficulty at the last hour. Not a single resident would give his name to indict the owner of the hall for breach of contract after duly letting it. Costs I had incurred beyond my means I was left to defray. Not a single journal ventured to report the proceedings. My original object, which was to reunite the friends of Freethought in the place, was entirely defeated, and never since has any party of protest or exposition existed in the town. Retaliation is very pleasant, but it is not often propagandism. This maxim is true in political, in moral, and in religious agitation.

## CHAPTER LVI.

### *SAWDUST CONTROVERSIALISTS.*

(1855.)

IN the early days of the *Reasoner*, a gentleman called upon me, saying he wished to contribute an argument upon the existence of Deity. He was a tall, low-speaking man, expensively dressed, and he sometimes came in a carriage with two horses—leaving them in a street near to my house. He gave the name of Aliquis, and desired to be known only by that name. It was ten years later before I knew his name to be Mr. George Gwynne. As he did not wish his name to transpire, I made no attempt to know it. He frequently sent cheques for £5, and occasionally more, to the *Reasoner* Fund. His ambition was to reply to a much paraded “Demonstration of the Existence of Deity” by one who, I believe, was a countryman of his—William Gillespie, of Bathgate, Scotland. No writer who assailed us was so dry, abstract, unimaginative as Mr. Gillespie; and Aliquis, in reasoning against him, acquired like qualities. Though both disputants had great powers of sequence, it was, as respects popular interest, the most sawdust controversy we ever had in that journal. Aliquis would never publish anything until he had discussed every line of his paper with me. When I thought the argument should be differently expressed, or changed in character, he would spend days in recasting it. He usually came to me at night when I was well weary of the day’s work, and made me read and analyse for hours every line of his argument. In this way I earned far more than the subscriptions he made to the *Reasoner*. It was impossible not to acquire the belief that the existence of Deity became much less

apparent during the wearisome years these two clever gentlemen spent in endeavouring to make it plain. They gave me the impression that theistical disputants had little material to go upon. Aliquis's was, like Gillespie's, dry-bone argument—a well-articulated frame of logic without a bit of flesh upon it.

True, writers without a gleam of imagination or a single striking sentence on their pen will expect you to publish their articles, which would kill a hundred readers a week and fill with dismay a thousand others. True, a proposition of Euclid has no single sentence which has any gleam of genius in it, but the whole proposition may be as delightful as a poem to him who eventually understands it. But such articles are for students and must be sparsely introduced in a paper for general reading. No popular paper can be conducted by charity. An editor must have money to pay for articles of such quality and variety as he may suggest or select. It is insufficient means that generally render propagandist journals uninteresting save to the converted.

I might here remark that money sent me for public purposes, received only on that ground, and publicly acknowledged as such, and spent with the knowledge of the subscribers, I was sometimes called upon to repay. One, a farmer in the Isle of Arran, whose proneness to extremes in advocacy I at times restrained, and who had sent £10 for the Fleet Street House, many years after threatened an action to recover the amount, with compound interest up to date.

William Honyman Gillespie, of Torbane Hill, Bathgate, had also an office in Melville Street, Edinburgh. Mr. Arthur Trevelyan had chambers in the same building, with only a partition wall between them. Neither knew nor suspected the identity of the other. Yet for many years they were in epistolary conflict. Coming downstairs one day from his chambers, Mr. Trevelyan suffered collision with a gentleman coming up. They mutually apologised and exchanged cards.

"Dear me," said Mr. Gillespie, looking at the card he had received, "are you Mr. Arthur Trevelyan? I am Mr. William Gillespie."

"Dear me," exclaimed Mr. Trevelyan, "we have been writing against each other for nine years, with only a partition wall

between us without knowing it. We might have discussed our differences with less trouble had we been aware how near we were to each other."

Gillespie always dating from Bathgate, and Trevelyan from Pencaitland, their neighbourhoodship in Edinburgh did not transpire between them.

Mr. Gillespie was the most uninteresting and self-sufficient of all the adversaries we encountered. The Rev. Brewin Grant had a diverting offensiveness; but Mr. Gillespie had his boundless egotism without being diverting at all. When he had come to an end of a series of his dreary letters, he wrote—"I need not tell you that our debate is finished. No one can be in any doubt as to how the discussion terminated. My adversary—to say nothing of his coadjutors—was flagrantly beaten." Yet all the while Mr. Gillespie was the most abstract, dull, and dry of all disputants. He had a leaden style, and no particle of imagination glimmered anywhere about it. The sawdust style is not uncommon in literature, but these controversialists excelled in it.

Mr. Arthur Trevelyan was the brother of Sir Walter Trevelyan, and uncle of Sir George Otto Trevelyan. Mr. Arthur had the strong decision of opinion which characterised the Trevelyan family. He acted on Archbishop Whately's principle—he not only "believed the opinions he maintained, but maintained them because he believed them." Whenever any emergency arose in the advocacy of views in which he was interested, his support could always be counted upon. If any one applied to me for aid which I was willing but unable to render, and I communicated the case to Mr. Trevelyan, he was sure to aid.

When I wrote the pamphlet, "The Social Means of Promoting Temperance," apart from a Maine Law, it was inscribed to "Arthur Trevelyan, J.P., of Pencaitland, the constant helper by his means, his influence and his example, of Social Progress and Unsectarian Temperance."

Arthur Trevelyan had more life in his writing than either of the others. His interests were wider. He cared for men and little for *a priori* abstractions. He had distinctive thoughts and passages in his communications which were worth noting. Still, he had a catapult style, and threw his arguments at the

reader. They were unconnected ; you could not tell whence they sprung ; but they hit, and often hurt, the enemy.

Arthur Trevelyan, like all his family, had the courage of his convictions. He sacrificed a valuable estate in his youth for love—preferring to marry one whom he liked, to a fortune. Like his brother, Sir Walter, he was an imperious abstainer. He did not believe in temperance—but in prohibition. One day, as I walked with him through his estate in Midlothian, where he had suppressed all the inns, he directed my attention to a girl with her mother's shawl hanging down over her dress. "That girl," he said, "has a bottle of whiskey suspended to her neck. She is the walking public-house of this village."

I answered that "It was a sad sight, and a bad method of enforcing abstention by demoralizing girls. It would be better to do as Lady Noel Byron did on her estates—keep the inns in her own hands, employing persons to manage them at a salary, they having no interest in selling drink, and whose instruction should be to serve but a limited quantity to each applicant."

Difference of opinion brought no estrangement. Arthur Trevelyan had as much tolerance in opinion as he had zeal—a rare thing in one who has great zeal.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### *STRANGE PROCEEDINGS OF A MAN WHO WAS AFTERWARDS BEHEADED.*

(1855.)

SEVERAL times I had received letters urging me to visit a friend in the West of England, whose daughter had read many publications of mine, and much desired to converse with me upon some of the subjects which had interested her. This led her father to invite me to spend a few days at his home. It appeared the young lady had been in ill-health for some time, and when she heard that I was in the courtyard, and about to enter the house, she expired. Afterwards I was his guest on two or three occasions. He wished a remaining daughter to be educated abroad. Her father made many remittances to the master, but heard very little of the pupil, and for a time nothing. One day he received a letter requesting an immediate remittance of money to defray the expenses of her burial, with thoughtful assurances that, since he could do no good, he need not give himself the pain of coming. This suspicious solicitude determined him. Being a man of promptitude, instead of sending the money he went himself, and found his daughter alive. He did not arrive too soon, for it was feared it was intended that she should die. She was confined in a room with so little to eat that other residents in the house, whose sympathy was called to her condition, sometimes threw her food over the fanlight of her chamber. Her father brought her back to his house straightway.

Afterwards he took a foreigner into the house for the purpose of having his daughter privately educated in languages at home.

His sympathy with the struggles of Continental nations at that time blinded him to the fact that everybody is not good even in a kingdom of patriots, and he was again unfortunate in his choice. The teacher he selected had a French wife. My friend's daughter being motherless, the French lady, who had assuming ways, and was a Lady Macbeth in determination, soon interfered in the control of the house. The foreign teachers became distasteful to the pupil, and, very little progress being made, they were ultimately desired to leave, when they refused to go.

The intruders had good discernment, and found out that the gentleman would be subject to unpleasant remarks from his neighbours if it transpired that his sympathy for foreign nationalities, of which they disapproved, had been ill-placed. The astute teachers concluded that he would be likely to sacrifice money rather than that the unsatisfactory relations with them should become known. My friend was anxious on this account to secure a peaceable departure of his vexatious guests; but there was a limit to which this apprehension might be pushed, of which they were not aware. The foreign lady had made herself a terror. Daily and increasing alarm being created in the house, the daughter one morning ran into the garden to her father for protection. He was a tall, powerfully built man, a Saul in stature, and commonly went about with a long staff, which looked like a young tree from its height and girth. He strode into the house, determined to put an end to the impudence of a forced occupancy of his home by strangers. On his appearance thus armed, the foreigner, who was pacing up and down the parlour, at once saw that mischief was meant, and drew a stiletto. Upon seeing this the host threw away the staff and prepared for a fight in the English manner. Whether the unfamiliar mode of attack dismayed his adversary or the fury displayed by one whose single blow might have broken the bones of the foe, the foreigner capitulated in haste.

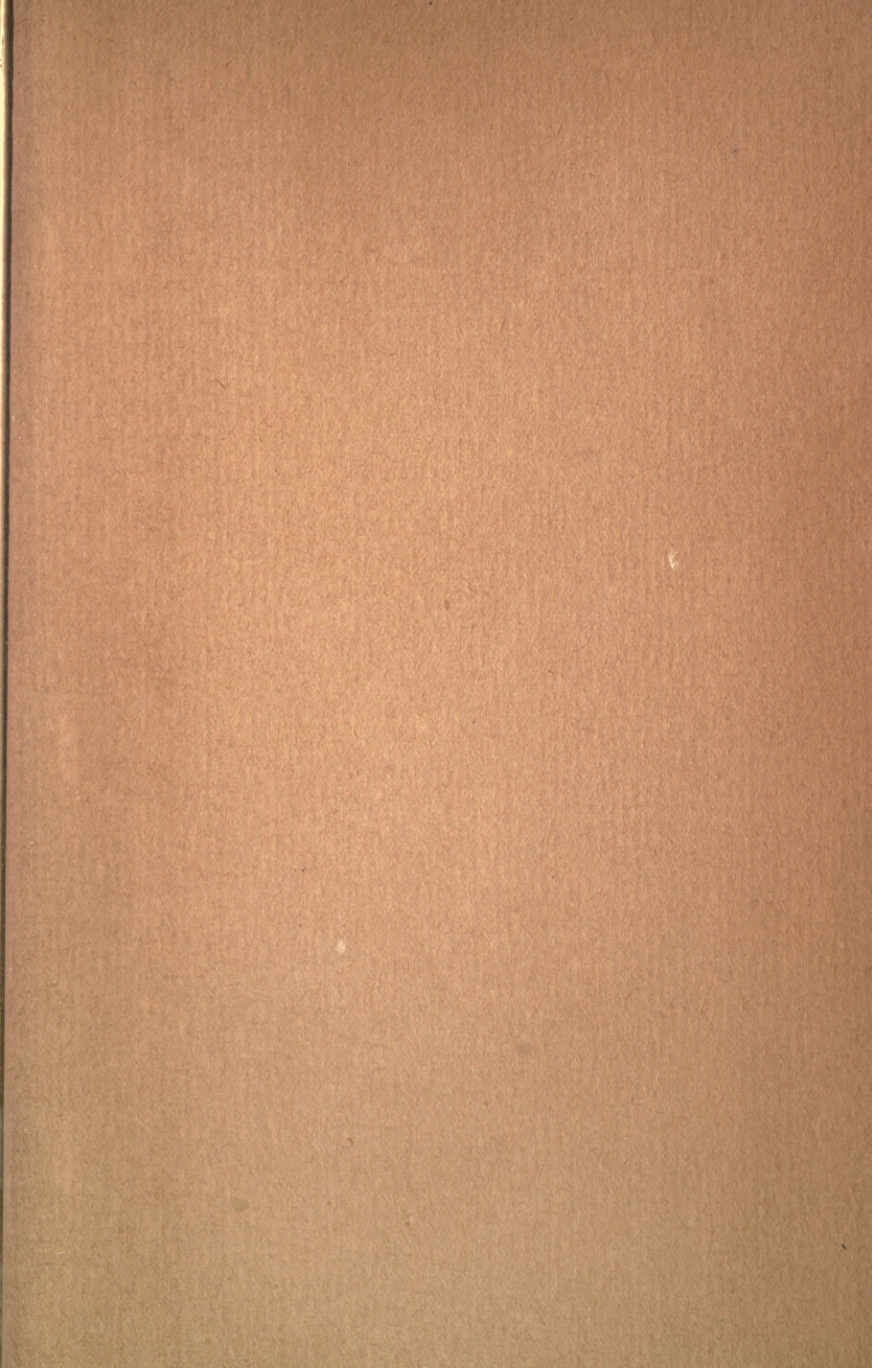
A cab was called, and the host went in it to the railway. This act passed for a courteous attention to his guests, but it was really a police precaution to see that they left the district. Forty sovereigns was given them for their journey.

This foreigner was Pieri, who was afterwards beheaded with Orsini, at La Roquette. It was believed that he acted under

the inspiration and terror of the formidable lady he had with him. Conspiracy might be a relief from such dominion. Anyhow a man who was capable of entering into a dangerous plot at the imminent risk of sacrificing his life, with a view to save his country, could not be wholly base ; and if he had been, such perilous devotion as he displayed for the advantage of two nations was some atonement.

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